

CHAN 3036(2)

**CHANDOS**  
OPERA IN  
ENGLISH



David Parry

Il Trovatore

# IL Verdi TROVATORE

---

PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

---



Giuseppe Verdi

AKG

## Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

### Il trovatore (The Troubadour)

Opera in four parts

Text by Salvatore Cammarano, from the drama *El trovador* by Antonio Garcia Gutiérrez

English translation by Tom Hammond

**Count di Luna**, a young nobleman of Aragon ..... Alan Opie *baritone*  
**Ferrando**, captain of the Count's guard ..... Clive Bayley *bass*  
**Doña Leonora**, lady-in-waiting to the Princess of Aragon ..... Sharon Sweet *soprano*  
**Inez**, confidante of Leonora ..... Helen Williams *soprano*  
**Azucena**, a gipsy woman from Biscay ..... Anne Mason *mezzo-soprano*  
**Manrico (The Troubadour)**, supposed son of Azucena, a rebel under Prince Urgel ..... Dennis O'Neill *tenor*  
**Ruiz**, a soldier in Manrico's service ..... Marc Le Brocq *tenor*  
**A Gipsy, a Messenger, Servants and Retainers of the Count, Followers of Manrico, Soldiers, Gipsies, Nuns, Guards**

### Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

### London Philharmonic Orchestra

Nicholas Kok and Gareth Hancock assistant conductors

### David Parry

Further appearances in **Opera in English**

**Dennis O'Neill:** *Cavalleria rusticana* (CHAN 3004 and CHAN 3005(2)), *Pagliacci* (CHAN 3003 and CHAN 3005(2)), *Tosca* (CHAN 3000(2)), *La bohème* (CHAN 3008(2)) and a recital disc of *Great Operatic Arias* (CHAN 3013)

**Alan Opie:** *The Barber of Seville* (CHAN 3025(2)), *Pagliacci* (CHAN 3003 and CHAN 3005(2)), *La bohème* (CHAN 3008(2)), *Mary Stuart* (CHAN 3017(2)) and *Rigoletto* (CHAN 3030(2))

**Clive Bayley:** Highlights from *Boris Godunov* (CHAN 3007)

COMPACT DISC ONE

Part I

Scene 1

[1]	'Wake up, there, wake up, there!'	3:06	90
	<i>Ferrando, Servants and Soldiers</i>		
[2]	'Heav'n had giv'n my old master'	7:45	90
	<i>Ferrando, Servants and Soldiers</i>		

Scene 2

[3]	'Come, wait no longer'	2:13	92
	<i>Inez and Leonora</i>		
[4]	'The stars shone in the heav'ns above'	4:58	93
	<i>Leonora and Inez</i>		
[5]	'No words can tell the measure'	1:42	94
	<i>Leonora and Inez</i>		
[6]	'How still the night is'	2:08	94
	<i>Count di Luna</i>		
[7]	'The Troubadour! The madman!' –		
	'Though naught on earth is left me'	2:25	94
	<i>Count di Luna, Manrico and Leonora</i>		
[8]	'Who's speaking?'	1:37	95
	<i>Leonora, Count di Luna and Manrico</i>		
[9]	'Jealous fury and slighted passion'	2:34	96
	<i>Count di Luna, Leonora and Manrico</i>		

Part II

Scene 1

[10]	'See how the shadowy clouds are flying' ('Anvil Chorus')	2:42	97
	<i>Gipsies</i>		
[11]	'Fierce flames are raging'	5:57	97
	<i>Azucena, Gipsies and Manrico</i>		
[12]	'They brought her, fettered and pow'rless'	7:59	98
	<i>Azucena and Manrico</i>		
[13]	'As we struggled he stumbled before me'	4:37	100
	<i>Manrico, Azucena and a Messenger</i>		
[14]	'You are still too weak to venture'	2:19	101
	<i>Azucena and Manrico</i>		

Scene 2

[15]	'All is deserted'	1:54	102
	<i>Count di Luna and Ferrando</i>		
[16]	'In the stars that shine above me'	4:19	102
	<i>Count di Luna and Ferrando</i>		
[17]	'The hour has come, no more delay'	3:03	103
	<i>Ferrando, Retainers and Count di Luna</i>		
[18]	'Here in this world of sorrow'	5:07	103
	<i>Nuns, Count di Luna, Ferrando, Retainers, Leonora and Inez</i>		
[19]	'Oh, can it be, can I believe'	4:46	104
	<i>Leonora, Count di Luna, Manrico, Inez, Ferrando, Nuns, Retainers, Ruiz and Followers</i>		

TT 71:23

COMPACT DISC TWO

**Part III**

**Scene 1**

[1]	'Though today we take our leisure' ('Soldiers' Chorus') <i>Soldiers and Ferrando</i>	4:34	107
[2]	'She's in my rival's arms' <i>Count di Luna, Ferrando, Guards and Azucena</i>	2:29	107
[3]	'Though my life was poor and lowly' <i>Azucena, Ferrando, Count di Luna and Guards</i>	3:12	109
[4]	'Ah! Release me from these cruel bonds' <i>Azucena, Count di Luna, Ferrando and Guards</i>	2:09	110

**Scene 2**

[5]	'But what mean all these sounds of war around us?' <i>Leonora and Manrico</i>	2:14	111
[6]	'When holy church has blessed our love' <i>Manrico, Leonora and Ruiz</i>	5:06	112
[7]	'That fierce inferno, her cruel sentence' <i>Manrico, Leonora, Ruiz and Soldiers</i>	3:17	113

**Part IV**

**Scene 1**

[8]	'We're there now' <i>Ruiz and Leonora</i>	3:00	113
-----	--	------	-----

[9]	'Breeze of night, go seek him' <i>Leonora</i>	4:06	114
[10]	'Lord, have mercy upon a soul departing' ('Miserere') <i>Chorus, Leonora and Manrico</i>	5:13	114
[11]	'You will see that my devotion' <i>Leonora</i>	2:10	115
[12]	'Now hear me!' <i>Count di Luna and Leonora</i>	1:54	115
[13]	'See all these bitter tears of mine' <i>Leonora and Count di Luna</i>	3:25	116
[14]	'The man shall live' – 'He lives! I cannot speak for joy' <i>Count di Luna and Leonora</i>	2:22	117
<b>Scene 2</b>			
[15]	'Mother, not sleeping?' <i>Manrico and Azucena</i>	5:26	118
[16]	'Yes, let me sleep for my limbs are weary...' <i>Azucena, Manrico and Leonora</i>	4:46	119
[17]	'You will not say?' <i>Manrico, Leonora and Azucena</i>	3:01	120
[18]	'Now leave me!' <i>Manrico, Leonora, Count di Luna and Azucena</i>	4:58	121

### Giuseppe Verdi: Il trovatore

Superior souls, even my own on occasions, tell us that the greatest Verdi is – of course – found in his two late masterpieces, *Otello* and *Falstaff*; and of the famed middle-period trinity, *La traviata* is placed above its two, more raw predecessors. Then there are the epic *Don Carlos*, the magical blend of lightness and tragedy of *Un ballo in maschera* and the sprawling panorama that is *La forza del destino*. Yet something about *Il trovatore* (The Troubadour) makes it unique in Verdi's output, a work that Julian Budden, in his comprehensive study of the operas, calls 'without parallel in the whole of operatic literature'.

His verdict is borne out whenever one hears the piece: its earthy energy, unending melody and onward thrust always catch the imagination anew. Verdi himself seems to have been immediately captured by the opportunities that Gutiérrez's drama *El trovador* would give him as a libretto. It offered in abundance the strong situations in which his sombre genius revelled: witness *Ernani* and *Macbeth* among *Trovatore's* predecessors in his œuvre. What particularly

appealed to him was the character of the gipsy woman Azucena, the perpetual conflict in her mind between maternal and filial love. No wonder he thought of naming the opera after her; no wonder all her music is so original and inspired.

Verdi was also attracted to her because, like Rigoletto, she was an outcast, an outsider; so he demanded from his librettist, the poet Salvatore Cammarano, a book that would allow him the freedom of expression already encountered in *Rigoletto*. Indeed he declared that when he was given verses to set, the more novel and bizarre they were the more he liked them. Cammarano may not have been quite up to the demands Verdi made upon him, rather too keen to follow the layout of the original play, but as an experienced man of the theatre he did provide Verdi with a libretto that readily fired the composer's fertile imagination. When the eccentric critic and musicologist Joseph Kerman declared that *Trovatore* is 'a magnificent demonstration of unprincipled melodrama' and a backsliding to 'the bad old style', he may not have studied the score closely enough. If he had done so he

would have found that, while superficially following the standard forms of early nineteenth-century opera in Italy, Verdi subtly and ingeniously altered them to make the free-flowing music drama that is one of *Trovatore's* overriding glories.

As Francis Toye, an eminent Verdian of an earlier generation, pointed out, this piece may be '*Ernani* in excelsis' and 'the apotheosis of both the good and bad in early Verdi', but you have only to examine the two scores, or better still encounter them in the theatre or on disc, to discover that in *Trovatore* Verdi had tightened his forms, improved his orchestral textures, and refined and varied his vocal lines so that, as is not the case in *Ernani* (a wonderful piece in its own rudimentary way), not a bar could really be removed without damaging its carefully crafted structure. Listen to the amazing close of Part II, ending with a repeat of Leonora's glorious phrase 'Have you come down from Paradise' (Sei tu dal ciel disceso) rather than a formal stretta, and the advance in Verdi's technique is plain, as it is, of course, throughout the concentrated, economic composition of the final scene, surely one of the greatest in all Verdi. In purely musical terms, matters such as key relationships, recurring motifs, and vocal

lines that precisely match the characters singing them unconsciously focus the mind and ear of the listener as he experiences this enthralling opera.

Ferrando's opening Narration, sometimes thought of as a weak passage, only there to elucidate the plot, is in fact a riveting tale, when fully understood (good reason to hear it in English), that immediately draws us into the strange tale of accidental death and its consequences, and of revenge to be wreaked on the errant gipsy woman. Verdi makes the scene hypnotic by the insistent repetition of a semiquaver figure.

Once in the garden of the palace we are in a different world, literally and musically: a world of romantic thought and love as Leonora recalls a strange encounter with a valorous knight. In 'The stars shone in the heav'ns above' (Tacea la notte), the first of the opera's heartrending and unforgettable melodies, Verdi produces a song of luminous beauty, itself capped by a cabaletta in which Leonora expresses undying love for the stranger. The Count di Luna enters to commune with Leonora, on whom he has set his cap, but he is interrupted – magical moment – by the voice of her lover Manrico, heard singing, in romantic terms, of his desolate heart: a typical

Verdian cantilena. After Leonora momentarily confuses the two, she and Manrico declare their love in rapturous terms while Luna denounces the brigand, all in an impetuous trio. The views of the love-triangle have been admirably adumbrated, the scene set for the ensuing conflicts.

The 'Anvil Chorus', sung by the gipsies at a wild spot in the Biscayan mountains, may have been spoilt by overuse in inappropriate circumstances. Heard afresh, its plain speaking about gipsy life is its own justification. Azucena's profile is defined in her two contrasted solos, the first hypnotic, recalling the burning of her mother, the second, for the ears of her supposed son Manrico alone, the terrible story of her own revenge, in which she inadvertently reveals that it was her own son and not the old Count's boy she had sacrificed. In both these solos Verdi, through the vigour of his rhythms and the limning of the text, graphically fills out Azucena's character.

Manrico, naturally unsettled by what he has just heard, seeks and gains reassurance from Azucena that indeed he is her son. In the following duet Manrico tells his own tale of his inability to kill his enemy Luna. His opening 'As we struggled' (*Mal reggendo*) is

typical of all his music in its rude energy tempered by lyrical ardour. He is interrupted by his sidekick Ruiz who tells him that Leonora, thinking him dead, is about to enter a convent. This is the signal for a forthright, headlong cabaletta.

We are now transported to the convent garden where the scheming Luna plans to abduct Leonora. He is given what was at one time the score's most famous number, 'In the stars' (*Il balen*), in which he expatiates on Leonora's attractions. It is indeed a gift for any baritone, an expression of fervent ardour, finely turned. In a fiery cabaletta he reveals his true nature. This is the very epitome of vigorous middle-period Verdi.

The final scene of Part II is masterly. First Verdi arrestingly contrasts the Count's imprecations with the soaring melody of the nuns' chorus. We suffer and feel for Leonora as she bids Inez farewell (Verdian recitative at its most eloquent) before the Count attempts to seize her. All are amazed by Manrico's sudden appearance, none more than Leonora whose phrases starting 'Oh, can it be, can I believe' (*E deggio e posso crederlo*) graphically suggest her feelings of relief and joy. The ensuing ensemble is the best kind of *concertato*, at which Verdi was becoming more

adept and daring with each opera, each character given a line appropriate to his or her state of mind before that phrase of Leonora's, already referred to above, shows the ecstasy of her reunion with the beloved.

After the soldiers' martial song at the start of Part III Azucena, captured by Luna's retainers, again takes centre stage, telling them in the lamenting tones of the moving solo 'Though my life was poor' (*Giorni poveri*) of her predicament. She reveals just a little too much about her past and is put in bonds by her captors, at which point she launches into a desperate cabaletta calling on Manrico to save her, while the Count exults in thoughts of double vengeance. Verdi is once more at his most compelling, the vocal and rhythmic counterpoint wholly apt to the situation and displayed with admirable brevity: so much is expressed in so small a space of time.

We return to the lovers for the next scene. In a recitative and aria Manrico displays his at once romantic and heroic nature. Then Leonora and he sing an exquisite duet as they intend to marry (compare a similar moment of fleeting happiness for the lovers in Act II of *Ernani*), before Ruiz reports Azucena's capture and the intention to burn her at the stake. Manrico rushes off to rescue her but not

before he sings his rousing cabaletta 'That fierce inferno' (*Di quella pira*), whose high Cs test any tenor's mettle and metal.

Manrico having failed in his mission, Leonora comes to the dungeon to see what she can do to save him. In an expressive *Adagio* 'she sighs out her soul to the night' in the critic Ernest Newman's apt phrase, though I dispute his view that the coloratura spoils it: it seems indeed to heighten the emotions that Leonora is expressing. The famous *Miserere* follows. A death bell tolls, a choir pleads for mercy in a solemn chant, Leonora laments in moving terms, and from the prison Manrico bemoans his unhappy lot. Verdi is here at his most inspired, offering a concept that was entirely new and exciting.

Left alone, Leonora sings a heartrending cabaletta saying Death cannot kill Love. A piece once omitted, it is in fact essential to both a full understanding of Leonora and to the scene's structure. No sooner has she sung her heart out than she is confronted by Luna. He doesn't at first see her and sings a soliloquy uncertain of her whereabouts. She steps out of the shadows and pleads for mercy for Manrico, 'See all these bitter tears of mine' (*Mira, di acerbe lagrime*) and asks that her life be taken instead. It is a vigorous duet, Leonora

desperately appealing to Luna's better nature, he implacable in his vengeance and lust. *In extremis*, she promises to be his if Manrico is freed. While he is giving a guard orders to that effect, she takes poison. They then launch into the fevered cabaletta 'He lives! I cannot speak for joy' (*Vivrà! Contende il giubilo*). The headlong tragedy is about to reach its climax.

The long dungeon duet, at the start of the final scene, between Azucena and Manrico is preceded by sombre, death-haunted chords. She speaks as if in a hazy dream, he tries to comfort her, and Verdi catches their respective feelings in phrases that etch themselves on the listener's mind. When Leonora enters and pleads with Manrico to escape, he realises that she has compromised herself on his behalf but does not know she has taken poison. He denounces her in virulent terms, but gradually, as she falters, he comes to his senses. The quick movement of the drama is tautly controlled by Verdi, who adds, in a stroke of genius, a repetition of Azucena's poignant lament. Leonora bids him farewell in a phrase, 'Rather than live to be his bride' (*Prima che d'altri vivere*), to die for, which she duly does. Luna steals in, gathers the truth, and commands Manrico to be taken to the scaffold. Only then does Azucena rouse herself, declaring that Luna

has sent his own brother to the block. Luna exclaims, with Leonora dead at his feet, 'And I still live!' (*E vivo ancor!*). This swift denouement brings down the curtain on an operatic experience that never stales.

© 2000 Alan Blyth

### The History behind 'Il trovatore'

#### The fifteenth century

The troubadour hero of Gutiérrez's play *El trovador* and of Verdi's opera *Il trovatore* is fictitious. So are Leonora, Azucena and even the Count di Luna despite his bearing a name redolent of the great events of Spanish history.

But the action of the opera takes place within a historical context. Leonora is lady-in-waiting to the Princess of Aragon and lives in the royal palace of Aliafería near Zaragoza. The Prince of Aragon's army is commanded by the Count di Luna. Manrico attests his allegiance to the opposing forces of Count Jaime de Urgel, whose name is invoked by Ruiz at the end of Part II (Long live freedom!/Urgel viva!). So, although politics remain in the shadow of the drama, they nevertheless exist.

The time is 1410 and the cause is the

struggle for the succession to the throne of Aragon. After two and a half centuries of Catalan rule, the death of the old King Martin had ended the hegemony of the Counts of Barcelona. His only son had died the previous year, leaving only an illegitimate grandson, Fadrique, favoured by the old king but unacceptable to the church. There were three other prominent candidates for the vacant throne.

Luis of Anjou was the grandson of King Martin's elder brother and predecessor King Juan, but was still a child and lived in France, and was identified as 'the French candidate'.

Ferdinand of Antequera was the son of Martin's sister Leonora. She had married into the Trastámara family, which ruled the neighbouring kingdom of Castile from 1368 to 1474. His elder brother Henry, known as the Ailing, had died in 1406, leaving as regent the queen mother Catherine of Lancaster, a descendant of John of Gaunt, whose imperialist Peninsular campaign lasted on and off between 1372 and 1386. Ferdinand's candidature had support from some of the nobility and eventually from the Pope.

Jaime of Urgel, however, started with the strongest claim. Not only was he married to Martin's younger sister Isabel, but he was

descended directly on the male side from Martin's grandfather, King Alfonso IV. Martin had awarded him the title of Lieutenant of Catalonia, customarily held by the heir to the Aragonese throne. This appointment enabled him to maintain an army but did little for his reputation for governing: he was known as Jaime the Hapless (or *El desdichado*). His support derived from his native Catalonia, from many of the dispossessed nobility, and initially from the Lunas, the family of the Pope.

The Pope, or rather anti-Pope as this was the period of the Great Schism, was Benedict XIII. Aragonese by birth and arrogant by nature, Benedict XIII was once Pedro de Luna and Cardinal of Aragon. He was deposed as Pope in 1409 but refused to resign and eventually retired to the stronghold of Peñíscola, where he reigned in splendid isolation as the most eccentric of the three rival popes. He was declared schismatic by the Council of Constance in 1417 and died in 1423.

Urgel's case was seriously weakened when his supporters (led by Don Antonio de Luna!) assassinated the Archbishop of Zaragoza, the head of the Aragonese church. The Pope excommunicated Antonio de Luna and

transferred his allegiance from Urgel to Ferdinand.

Instead of the traditional election by Cortès, it was decided to form a commission of nine theologians and jurists, three from each province, to make a judgement between the candidates. The Compromise of Caspe, the small town where the boundaries of the provinces met, took nine months to find by majority vote in favour of Ferdinand.

Urgel did not accept the verdict and retired to Gascony to gather troops for rebellion. He then invaded the kingdom through Biscayan country. It is this civil war which forms the background for *Il trovatore*. The Count di Luna in the opera is commander-in-chief of Ferdinand's army. Manrico is a guerilla leader on the side of the Count of Urgel.

Urgel's rebellion was eventually defeated, and he died in captivity. Ferdinand became the undisputed King of Aragon. Though he owed his throne to the support of the church, he soon disowned Benedict XIII, the Aragonese anti-Pope. During his short reign he also offended the Catalans by relying on Castilian advisers. Nevertheless he acquired the name Ferdinand the Just. He was succeeded in 1416 by his better known son Alfonso the Magnanimous. Aragon and Castile were finally

united in 1479 when the two branches of the Trastámaras were brought together by the union of Ferdinand and Isabella.

### The nineteenth century

Those who accuse Verdi of accepting a complicated plot may be grateful that he excluded so much of the fifteenth-century historical detail. Art, as often, managed to simplify life. Verdi instinctively saw the dramatic conflict inherent in the historical situation. *Il trovatore* is not the only example in Verdi's output of the strong dramatic possibilities arising from Spain's slow emergence from the Middle Ages. Already in *Ernani* he had depicted the period a century later, in which the feudal divisions were brought together under the strong, centralised leadership of Charles V. Later he was to return to Spanish history at the time of Charles's son, Philip II, for his *Don Carlos*.

Gutiérrez's play has more in common with Victor Hugo's *Hernani* than with the more sophisticated drama of Schiller's *Don Carlos*. The first night of *El trovador* on 1 March 1836 was a success unparalleled in Spain's theatrical history and marked the first occasion on which an author had appeared on stage to receive the public's acclaim.

At the time, the twenty-three-year-old Gutiérrez had enlisted as a volunteer in the army which Mendizabel was raising to defend the liberal constitutional monarchy of the young Queen Isabella II against the rival claims of her uncle, the arch-absolutist pretender Don Carlos. The fifteenth-century civil war thus had a special contemporary significance for the young Gutiérrez and his excitable audience.

And so, in a more generalised way, it did for Verdi in the political turmoil of mid-nineteenth-century Italy. 1848 was the Year of Revolutions, including the First Italian War of Independence. Sicily expelled Neapolitan troops and declared an independent democracy. Austrian troops were expelled from Lombardy and the Veneto. Naples, Tuscany, the Papal States and Piedmont were compelled to grant written constitutions. Venice was declared a republic. The Pope fled from Rome.

Verdi's *La battaglia di Legnano*, perhaps his most overtly political opera, was premiered in Rome on 27 January 1849. Less than two weeks later Rome was declared a republic. The triumph of the liberals, with whom Verdi was identified, was short-lived, however. That summer the Roman republic was crushed and the Pope was restored by French troops. The

Austrians reconquered Lombardy and the Veneto. Bourbon absolutism was restored to Naples under Austrian protection. Only Piedmont retained a democratic constitution under Vittorio Emanuele.

In 1852 Camillo Benso di Cavour was appointed first minister of Piedmont. He was to become the principal architect of Italian unification, and he was unstintingly admired by Verdi. Cavour invited Verdi to stand as a deputy in the first national parliament in 1861.

The Second Italian War of Independence began when Cavour received the Austrian ultimatum on 23 April 1859. So excited was he that he could do nothing but dance around the room waving the despatch in the air. He finally found release for his accumulated emotions by flinging wide the window and belting out Manrico's 'Di quella pira' (That fierce inferno) at the top of his voice. On this occasion history imitated art.

© 2000 Nicholas Payne

### Synopsis of the opera

The action of the opera takes place in northern Spain, in the provinces of Aragon and Biscay.



Twenty years before the events of the opera, the old Count di Luna had two infant sons. When the younger, Don Garzia, mysteriously began to sicken, an old gipsy, who had once been found lurking by his cradle, was immediately suspected of bewitching him. She was arrested and burned to death. With her dying words she called upon her daughter Azucena to exact revenge. Soon afterwards the boy Garzia disappeared, and the charred remains of a child's skeleton were found among the ashes of the gipsy's pyre. But the old Count remained convinced that his younger son had survived and, with his last breath, called upon his heir to continue the search.

The years have passed; the country is in a state of civil war. The rebel Biscayan forces are ranged against the royalist troops led by the young Count di Luna.

### Part I. The Duel

#### *Scene 1. A vestibule in the royal palace of Aliafería*

It is almost midnight. The Soldiers of the watch are weary. Ferrando warns them to keep a lookout for the unknown troubadour whose singing continually interrupts the Count's nightly watch beneath Leonora's window [1]. To keep them awake he agrees to tell his version of the

events surrounding Garzia's disappearance [2]. He is convinced that the old gipsy was a malign sorceress whose protestations of innocence were lies, and that her daughter's mad vengeance remains to be punished. They superstitiously believe that the gipsy's spirit still haunts the palace. When midnight strikes, the men scatter in terror.

#### *Scene 2. The gardens of the palace*

Leonora lingers late on her way back to the palace in the hope of seeing the unknown knight with whose valour she fell in love at a tournament before the civil war began [3]. She tells Inez how he has returned as a troubadour singing plaintive songs of love wafted to her by the scented night air [4]. Despite her friend's warnings she vows to remain true to him, even should it lead to death [5].

The Count is determined to force himself upon Leonora [6] but is disturbed by the sounds of his unknown rival's serenade [7]. Running towards her lover's voice in the darkness, Leonora blunders into the arms of the Count. Manrico reveals himself [8] and the Count recognises him as a condemned traitor in league with the rebel Urgel. Despite Leonora's protests the two jealous rivals rush off to fight [9].

### Part II. The Gipsy

#### *Scene 1. A rebel camp in the mountains of Biscay*

It is almost dawn. A band of gipsies prepares for another day's work by taking up the blacksmith's irons [10].

Alerted by news of the recent rebel defeat, Azucena found Manrico left for dead on the battlefield and nursed him back to health. Now she broods by the fire and obsessively relives the scene of her mother's death [11].

When the gipsies have departed, Manrico demands to know the full tragic story. Azucena's version is that her mother was falsely accused of witchcraft by a wicked Count and condemned to a terrible death [12]. She followed her mother at a distance, her own child in her arms, and struggled through the pressing crowds, close enough to hear her mother's dying curse – 'Avenge my death' – which has remained with her ever since. She stole the Count's child from his palace, intending to burn him in the relit embers of her dying mother's fire, but, crazed by pity, guilt and horror, murdered her own child instead.

'Who am I?', demands Manrico. 'You are my own son!', Azucena lies, anxiously trying to alter her impassioned story. She cites her maternal care for him as evidence, how she

rescued him from the battlefield and tended his wounds. She reproaches Manrico for sparing his rival's life the night he overpowered him in the duel, only to let himself be wounded by Luna's men in the subsequent battle. Manrico tries to explain how an inner voice stayed his hand on that occasion, but swears not to spare his rival again [13].

A messenger delivers a letter. The rebels have captured the stronghold of Castellar and Manrico is to take charge of its defence. The letter adds that Leonora, believing him dead, is to enter a convent that very evening. Despite Azucena's protests [14] Manrico rushes away to rescue his love.

#### *Scene 2. The convent of the Holy Cross at Castellar*

The Count, enflamed by his scorned passion and believing Manrico dead, is also determined to prevent Leonora from taking the veil. He has planned for his retainers to kidnap her so that she may be his alone [15]–[17].

Leonora is resigned to her grief and bids her friends farewell [18]. She is surprised by the Count but his ambush is thwarted by the miraculous appearance of Manrico [19]. His followers disarm the Count and Manrico abducts Leonora.

### Part III. The Gipsy's Son

#### *Scene 1. The Count di Luna's camp before the walls of Castellar*

The Count's soldiers are relaxing before their planned assault on the rebel position at Castellar [1]. Ferrando promises them rich plunder when they take it. The Count is tormented by the knowledge that Leonora is there with Manrico [2].

Azucena is found wandering behind the lines and is brought in for questioning on suspicion of spying. At first the Count shows some sympathy towards the poor Biscayan gipsy, hoping she might have some knowledge of his brother stolen twenty years ago [3]. Only when Ferrando recognises her as Garzia's suspected murderess, and Azucena inadvertently calls on the absent Manrico to save his mother, does the Count realise that, through her, he has the power to avenge himself both on his brother's killer and on his hated rival [4]. Azucena is dragged off to be burned.

*Scene 2. A hall next to the chapel in Castellar*  
Despite the impending battle Manrico and Leonora are about to be married [5]–[6]. Ruiz reports the capture and imminent burning of Azucena. Manrico confesses to Leonora that it

is his mother who is in danger. He abandons his marriage and summons his soldiers to engage in an immediate rescue attempt [7].

### Part IV. The Torture

#### *Scene 1. A wing of the palace of Aliaferia*

The attempt failed. Manrico has been captured. It is night. Ruiz escorts Leonora within the fortress and indicates the tower where Manrico is incarcerated [8]. She is calmly determined [9]. While a solemn Miserere is intoned [10], Manrico's voice is heard singing a last farewell. Leonora resolves to save him [11]. The Count arrives to supervise the execution of his two prisoners [12] and is astonished to find Leonora. She offers herself to him in return for Manrico's release [13]. While the Count arranges Manrico's release, she swallows poison [14].

#### *Scene 2. Inside the prison*

Manrico tries to comfort Azucena, still tortured by memories of her mother's fate which now awaits her [15]. She knows she is close to death but falls asleep dreaming of the mountains of her homeland [16]. Leonora arrives to tell Manrico he is free to go at once, but she must stay. At first he bitterly reproaches her for betraying their love [17], but

as the poison takes effect he realises the sacrifice she has made for his freedom [18]. When the Count discovers that he has been deceived and that Leonora is dying before his eyes, he orders Manrico's immediate execution. He drags Azucena to witness it. At last she reveals the truth: 'Manrico was your brother! You are avenged, oh mother!'

© 2000 Nicholas Payne

**Alan Opie** trained at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and at the London Opera Centre. He became Principal Baritone at English National Opera while still a student and served as company member for more than twenty-five years; he has been a regular guest since 1996. His repertoire has included the title roles in *The Barber of Seville*, *Falstaff* (nominated for an *Olivier* award) and Busoni's *Dr Faust* as well as Don Alfonso, Papageno, Dr Malatesta, Don Carlo (*Ernani*), Germont, Melitone (*The Force of Destiny*), Ford, Sharpless, Eisenstein, Dr Falke, the Fiddler (Humperdinck's *Die Königskinder*), Valentin, Kovaljov (Shostakovich's *The Nose*) and Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*). He has appeared with all the major British opera companies and at opera houses throughout Europe (including

Bavarian State Opera, Vienna State Opera and the Bayreuth Festival) and in Chicago and New York (The Metropolitan Opera). Notable successes have included Paolo (*Simon Boccanegra*), Sharpless, Beckmesser (at Bayreuth), Balstrode, the Forester (*The Cunning Little Vixen*) and the title role in Luciano Berio's *Outis* (at Teatro alla Scala and Châtelet théâtre musical). His many recordings, besides the role of Beckmesser in the *Grammy*-award winning *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* under Sir Georg Solti, include *Christopher Columbus* (a pastiche with music by Offenbach) and Offenbach's *Robinson Crusoe* for Opera Rara and, for Chandos, *Peter Grimes* (which won a *Grammy* award), *Billy Budd*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Martin's Lie* (Menotti), *Troilus and Cressida* (Walton), *War and Peace* (Prokofiev) and, in association with the Peter Moores Foundation, *Mary Stuart*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Rigoletto*, *Pagliacci* and *La bohème*.

Trained at the Royal Northern College of Music, the bass **Clive Bayley** is well established on major concert and opera stages throughout Great Britain and abroad and has developed a repertoire that ranges from Monteverdi to Birtwistle. He made his debut

with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden in the world premiere of Sir Harrison Birtwistle's *Gawain*, and have subsequently appeared as Colline, Hans Flotz (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) and José Castro (*La fanciulla del West*). His numerous roles with Opera North have included Antinoo (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), Wurm (*Luisa Miller*), Sparafucile, Ferrando (*Il trovatore*), the Monk and the Grand Inquisitor (*Don Carlos*), the title role in *Le nozze di Figaro*, the Commendatore, Sarastro, Biterolf (*Tannhäuser*), the Doctor (*Wozzeck*), Arkel, Kecal (*The Bartered Bride*), Ebn-Hakia (*Yolande/Iolanta*) and Sir Walter Raleigh (*Gloriana*) beside appearing in the British premiere of Verdi's *Jerusalem*. At English National Opera he has sung Cadmus (*Semele*), Arkel and roles in *The Tales of Hoffmann*, *Dr Faust*, *Wozzeck* and *Billy Budd*. His many recordings include, for Chandos, *Troilus and Cressida* (Walton), *Billy Budd* and, in association with the Peter Moores Foundation, *Don Pasquale* and highlights from *Boris Godunov*.

The dramatic soprano **Sharon Sweet** began her international career with a concert performance of *Aida* in Munich and continued it with successful interpretations of Leonora

(*Il trovatore*) and Elisabeth (*Tannhäuser*) at the German Opera in Berlin during the 1986/87 season. Appearances followed at the Paris Opéra (Elisabetta di Valois in *Don Carlos*), in Vienna, Zurich, Hamburg and at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich. Specially popular roles include Norma (Théâtre royal de la Monnaie, Brussels and in Rome, Barcelona, Lisbon and Bilbao) and Aida (the Arena in Verona and in her American debut in San Francisco in 1989). In 1990 she made her debut at The Metropolitan Opera, New York in *Il trovatore* and has returned every season in works that include *Don Giovanni*, *Stiffelio*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *La forza del destino*, beside the title role in *Turandot* which she has also taken to The Royal Opera, Covent Garden, the Opéra national de Paris-Bastille, to Florence and to the Forbidden City in Beijing. Most recently she has sung Aida at The Metropolitan Opera and Ariadne (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. She has appeared in concert with the world's leading musicians and made several acclaimed recordings, including *Falstaff* under Sir Colin Davis.

Having studied singing at the Royal Northern College of Music, soprano **Helen Williams** has continued her studies with Gerald Martin

Moore in London. She made her Glyndebourne Festival Opera debut in 1988 as Sashka in Osborne's *The Electrification of the Soviet Union*, returning to sing Emmie in *Albert Herring*. She appeared in *Peter Grimes* at the St Endellion Festival in 1994. Her roles elsewhere have included Dalinda (*Ariadante*) and Amor (*Orpheus and Eurydice*) with English National Opera; Yvette (*La rondine*) and Second Niece (*Peter Grimes*, on tour to Finland) with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Naiade (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) and First Lady (*The Magic Flute*) with Scottish Opera; Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) with Opera North; Ellen in the world premiere of *Hey Persephone!* at Aldeburgh and the Almeida Festival; and Flaminia (Haydn's *Il mondo della luna*) with Opera Zuid in Holland. Her concert repertoire is wide ranging and her recordings include, for Chandos in association with the Peter Moores Foundation, Donizetti's *The Elixir of Love*.

Born in Lincolnshire and trained at the Royal Academy of Music and at the National Opera Studio, mezzo-soprano **Anne Mason** made her professional debut at Opera North, singing Fenena (*Nabucco*) and Second Lady (*The Magic Flute*). She made her debut with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden singing Mercedes

(*Carmen*) on tour of the Far East and has since performed numerous roles with the company, including Marcellina (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Annus (*La clemenza di Tito*), Enrichetta (*I puritani*), Emilia (*Otello*), Suzuki, Wellgunde (*Das Rheingold* and *Götterdämmerung*), Waltraute (*Die Walküre*), Annina (*Der Rosenkavalier*) and Guinevere (Sir Harrison Birtwistle's *Gawain*). She has also appeared with Welsh National Opera (Dorabella), English National Opera (Marcellina and Dorabella), Scottish Opera (Cornelia in *Julius Caesar*, Sextus in *La clemenza di Tito* and Adalgisa in *Norma*), Glyndebourne Festival and Touring Operas and at the BBC Promenade Concerts. Abroad she has sung at The Netherlands Opera (Suzuki), Madrid Opera, Semper Opera, Dresden (Penelope in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), Batignano (Penelope), Theater Basel (the title role in *Giulio Cesare*) and at the Aix-en-Provence Festival and Innsbruck Festival of Early Music. She is an active concert artist and her recordings include, for Opera Rara, Donizetti's *Emilia di Liverpool* and Mayr's *Medea in Corinto*.

Born in Wales of Irish and Welsh parents, **Dennis O'Neill** is one of the world's leading tenors and a specialist in the works of Verdi.

He enjoys a close relationship with Welsh National Opera and with The Royal Opera, Covent Garden where his many roles have included Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Jacopo (*I due Foscari*), Carlo (*Giovanna d'Arco*), Foresto (*Attila*), Macduff, the Duke (*Rigoletto*), Gustavo, Aroldo, Don Carlos, Radames, Otello, Rodolfo (*La bohème*) and Pinkerton. North American engagements have included The Metropolitan Opera, New York (as Alfredo, Radames, Turiddu and Canio among others), Lyric Opera of Chicago, the San Francisco, San Diego and Vancouver Operas, the Philadelphia and Cleveland Symphonies, the Montreal and Ottawa Symphony Orchestras and the Cincinnati Festival. In Europe he has been a frequent guest at the Bavarian State Opera in Munich, where roles have included Manrico and Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*), and has visited the opera houses of Vienna, Berlin, Bonn, Cologne, Hamburg, Paris, Nice, Zurich, Brussels, Oslo, Barcelona, Oviedo, Verona and Turin. Besides being a distinguished artist in concert and on television, Dennis O'Neill has made numerous recordings, including *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Tosca*, *La bohème* and a solo recital album for Chandos in association with the

Peter Moores Foundation. He was awarded the CBE in the 2000 New Year's Honours list.

After winning several prizes at the Royal Academy of Music, the tenor **Mark Le Brocq** continued his studies at the National Opera Studio. He is currently a Company Principal at English National Opera where he has sung Boggart (*The Fairy Queen*), Odoardo (*Ariodante*), Don Curzio (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Don Ottavio, Tamino, Monostatos, Borsa, Cassio (*Otello*), Remendado (*Carmen*), Rodriguez (Massenet's *Don Quixote*), Nathaniel (*The Tales of Hoffmann*), Tonik (Smetana's *The Two Widows*), Missail (*Boris Godunov*), Narraboth (*Salome*), Paris (*King Priam*), First Officer (Henze's *The Prince of Homburg*) and Doctor Maxwell (Turnage's *The Silver Tassie*) among others. He has performed as a recital and oratorio soloist in concert and at festivals throughout Europe, in the Middle East and the USA as well as at all the major London venues. He has made several sound and video recordings.

Geoffrey Mitchell's singing career has encompassed a remarkably wide repertoire from early to contemporary music and has taken him to Scandinavia, Germany, the

former Czechoslovakia, Canada and Australasia. Early conducting experience with the BBC led to a wider involvement with his own singers and in turn to the establishment of the **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Early recordings resulted in the Choir's long-term involvement with Opera Rara for which it has made over thirty recordings. The Choir is enjoying a growing reputation with further work from the BBC and international recording companies. For Chandos the Geoffrey Mitchell Choir has participated in numerous recordings in the acclaimed Opera in English series sponsored by the Peter Moores Foundation.

The **London Philharmonic Orchestra** has exhilarated audiences with performances featuring world renowned conductors and soloists since its foundation in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham. Principal conductors in the years since have included Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Franz Welser-Möst. Kurt Masur becomes the Orchestra's new principal Conductor in September 2000. Appointed resident orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall from 1992 the London Philharmonic Orchestra has also been resident

symphony orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera for the past thirty-five years. The Orchestra's versatility and reputation for artistic excellence are also evident from its pioneering education work and community projects, its many award-winning recordings and its trail-blazing international tours.

**David Parry** studied with Sergiu Celibidache and began his career as Sir John Pritchard's assistant. He made his debut with English Music Theatre, then became a staff conductor at Städtische Bühnen Dortmund and at Opera North. He was Music Director of Opera 80 from 1983 to 1987 and since 1992 has been the founding Music Director of Almeida Opera.

He works extensively in both opera and concert, nationally and internationally. He has conducted several productions at English National Opera and appears regularly with the Philharmonia Orchestra. In 1996 he made his debut at the Glyndebourne Festival with *Così fan tutte*, where in 1998 he conducted the world premiere of Jonathan Dove's *Flight*.

He is a frequent visitor to Spain where he has given concerts with most of the major Spanish orchestras. He conducted the Spanish premiere of *Peter Grimes* in Madrid and in

1996 the first Spanish production of *The Rake's Progress*. He has appeared in Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands, at the Pesaro Festival in Italy, the Hong Kong International Festival, in Japan with a tour of *Carmen* and in Mexico with the UNAM Symphony Orchestra. Recent new productions he has conducted include *Fidelio* at the New Zealand Festival, *Maria Stuarda* at Theater Basel and *Lucia di Lammermoor* at New Israeli Opera.

His work in the recording studio includes the BBC Television production of Marschner's *Der Vampyr* and twenty-one complete opera recordings under the sponsorship of the Peter

Moore's Foundation. Among these are numerous discs for the Opera Rara label which have won several awards, including the Belgian Prix Cecilia for Donizetti's *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. For Chandos he has conducted seven recordings of operatic arias (with Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson and Della Jones, the last two to be issued during 2000 and 2001), as well as *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *The Elixir of Love*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, the award-winning *Tosca* and highlights from *Der Rosenkavalier*, all in association with the Peter Moore's Foundation.



Winnie Klotz/The Metropolitan Opera

Sharon Sweet as Leonora in the 1990 Metropolitan Opera production of *Il trovatore*

### PETER MOORES, CBE, DL

Peter Moores was born in Lancashire, the son of Sir John Moores, founder of the giant Littlewoods mail order, chain store and football pools group. He was educated at Eton and Christ Church, Oxford, where he read modern languages – he was already fluent in German and Italian. It was opera, however, which was his great love. He had worked at Glyndebourne Festival Opera before going up to university, and after Oxford he became a production student at the Vienna State Opera, combining this with a three-year course at the Vienna Academy of Music and Dramatic Art.

By the end of his third year at the Academy Moores had produced the Vienna premiere of Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*, had worked as Assistant Producer at the San Carlo Opera House, Naples, the Geneva Festival and Rome Opera, and seemed set for a successful operatic career. At this point he received a letter from his father asking him to come home as he was needed in the firm. Family loyalty being paramount, he returned to Liverpool.

From 1981 to 1983 he was a Governor of the BBC, and a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1978 until 1985; from 1988 to 1992 he was a director of Scottish Opera. He received the Gold Medal of the Italian Republic in 1974, an Honorary MA from Christ Church, Oxford, in 1975, and was made an Honorary Member of the Royal Northern College of Music in 1985. In May 1992 he became Deputy Lieutenant of Lancashire, and in the New Year's Honours List for 1991, he was made a CBE for his charitable services to the Arts.

Whilst still in his early twenties, Peter Moores had started



Christina Buron/PMF

Peter Moores, CBE, DL

giving financial support to various young artists, several of whom – Joan Sutherland, Colin Davis and the late Geraint Evans amongst them – were to become world-famous. In 1964 he set aside a substantial part of his inheritance to establish the Peter Moores Foundation, a charity designed to support those causes dear to his heart: to make music and the arts more accessible to more people; to give encouragement to the young and to improve race relations.

### PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

In the field of music, the main areas supported by the Peter Moores Foundation are:

- the recording of operas from the core repertoire sung in English translation; the recording or staging of rare Italian opera from the *bel canto* era of the early nineteenth century (repertoire which would otherwise only be accessible to scholars); the nurturing of promising young opera singers; new operatic work.

The Foundation awards scholarships annually to students and post-graduates for furthering their vocal studies at the Royal Northern College of Music. In addition, project awards may be given to facilitate language tuition in the appropriate country, attendance at masterclasses or summer courses, specialised repertoire study with an acknowledged expert in the field, or post-graduate performance training.

The Foundation encourages new operatic work by contributing to recordings, the publication of scores and stage productions.

Since 1964 the Foundation has supported the recording of more than forty operas, many of these sung in English, in translation. It has always been Peter Moores's belief that to enjoy opera to the full, there must be no language barrier, particularly for newcomers and particularly in the popular repertoire – hence the *Opera in English* series launched with Chandos in 1995. This includes many of the English language recordings funded by the Foundation in the 1970s and 1980s and is now the largest recorded collection of operas sung in English.

## Giuseppe Verdi: Il trovatore

Überlegene Geister – und gelegentlich auch ich selbst – behaupten, die beiden größten Opern Verdis seien seine beiden späten Meisterwerke *Otello* und *Falstaff*, während sie bei dem berühmten Triptychon der mittleren Schaffensperiode *La traviata* ihren beiden noch etwas rohen Vorgängern vorzuziehen pflegen. Ferner wären der epische *Don Carlos*, die magische Verbindung von Leichtigkeit und Tragödie von *Un ballo in maschera* und das ausgebreitete Panorama von *La forza del destino* zu nennen. Doch irgendetwas an *Il trovatore* (Der Troubadour) läßt das Werk als einzigartig in Verdis Schaffen erscheinen – ein Werk, das Julian Budden in seiner umfassenden Studie über Verdis Opern als “in der gesamten Opernliteratur ohne Parallele” bezeichnet.

Dieses Urteil bestätigt sich, wann immer man das Stück hört: seine sinnliche Energie, endlose Melodik und vorwärts drängende Bewegung fesseln die Fantasie des Hörers immer wieder aufs Neue. Verdi selbst scheint das Potential von Gutiérrez’ Drama *El trovador* als Libretto unmittelbar erkannt zu haben. Das Werk bot im Überfluß die Art von

dramatischen Situationen, die sein düsterer Genius bevorzugte – man denke nur an *Ernani* und *Macbeth* unter den Vorgängern von *Il trovatore*. Besonders zog ihn die Figur der Zigeunerin Azucena an mit ihrem andauernden seelischen Konflikt zwischen mütterlicher und töchterlicher Liebe. Kein Wunder, daß Verdi mit dem Gedanken spielte, die Oper nach ihr zu benennen; kein Wunder, daß all ihre Partien so besonders originell und inspiriert sind.

Ein weiterer Grund für Verdis Sympathie für die Rolle der Azucena lag darin, daß sie wie Rigoletto eine Verstoßene, eine Außenseiterin war; von seinem Librettisten, dem Dichter Salvatore Cammarano, verlangte er daher ein Libretto, das ihm die von *Rigoletto* her bekannte Freiheit des musikalischen Ausdrucks erlauben würde. Er erklärte sogar, je neuartiger und bizarrer die Textvorlage, desto leichter fiel ihm ihre Vertonung. Indem er sich ein wenig zu eng an die Struktur des ursprünglichen Schauspiels hielt, mag Cammarano Verdis Erwartungen zwar nicht ganz erfüllt haben, als erfahrener Mann des Theaters lieferte er jedoch ein Libretto, das es

leicht vermochte, die fruchtbare Erfindungsgabe des Komponisten zu inspirieren. Der exzentrische Kritiker und Musikwissenschaftler Joseph Kerman, der *Il trovatore* als “eine großartige Darstellung hemmungslosen Melodrams” und einen Rückfall in den “schlechten alten Stil” bezeichnete, hat sich möglicherweise nicht hinreichend intensiv mit der Partitur auseinandergesetzt. Hätte er dies getan, so wäre ihm aufgefallen, daß Verdi vordergründig zwar den Standardformen der italienischen Oper des frühen 19. Jahrhunderts folgt, diese aber in subtiler und genialer Weise verändert, um das frei fließende Musikdrama zu schaffen, durch das *Il trovatore* sich besonders auszeichnet.

Francis Toye, eminenter Verdianer einer früheren Generation, hat die Meinung geäußert, dieses Stück sei “*Ernani* in excelsis” und “die Apotheose des Guten und Schlechten im Frühwerk Verdis”; man muß jedoch nur die Partituren der beiden Werke studieren, oder besser noch sie in der Oper oder auf CD hören, um zu entdecken, daß Verdi im *Trovatore* seine Formen gestrafft, die orchestralen Strukturen verbessert und seine Gesangslinien verfeinert und individualisiert hatte, so daß – im Gegensatz zu *Ernani* (auf

seine unfertige Art ebenfalls ein wunderbares Stück) – nicht ein einziger Takt entfernt werden könnte, ohne die sorgfältig entwickelte Struktur dieser Oper zu beschädigen. Hören Sie nur das erstaunliche Ende vom Zweiten Teil mit seiner Wiederholung von Leonoras wundervoller Phrase “Bist du aus dem Paradies herabgestiegen” (Have you come down from Paradise/Sei tu dal ciel disceso) anstelle einer förmlichen Stretta, und die Entwicklung in Verdis Technik wird unmittelbar deutlich, wie sich auch in der konzentrierten, ökonomischen Komposition der Schlußszene zeigt, die sicherlich eine der größten im gesamten Œuvre Verdis ist. Auf rein musikalischer Ebene sind Tonartbeziehungen, wiederkehrende Motive und Melodielinien ganz auf die jeweiligen Charaktere zugeschnitten und dienen so unbewußt zur Konzentration von Geist und Ohr des Hörers, der sich dieser bezaubernden Oper hingibt.

Ferrandos einleitender Bericht, der gelegentlich als struktureller Schwachpunkt gesehen wird, der lediglich dazu diene, die Handlung zu erhellen, ist in Wirklichkeit eine fesselnde Erzählung – wenn man sie nur versteht –, die uns unmittelbar in diese eigenwillige Geschichte verstrickt von plötzlichem Tod und seinen Konsequenzen

und von der Rache, die an der auf Abwege geratenen Zigeunerin verübt werden soll. Verdi verleiht dieser Szene durch die ständige Wiederholung einer Sechzehntelfigur eine hypnotische Wirkung.

Mit dem Palastgarten erreichen wir eine ganz andere Welt, im wörtlichen wie im musikalischen Sinne: eine Welt der romantischen Gedanken und Gefühle, in der Leonora sich an eine seltsame Begegnung mit einem kühnen Ritter erinnert. Mit "Schweigend und sanft war die Nacht" (The stars shone in the heav'n's above/Tacea la notte), der ersten der herzbewegenden und unvergesslichen Melodien dieser Oper, schuf Verdi ein Lied von strahlender Schönheit, noch übertroffen von der sich anschließenden Cabaletta, in der Leonora ihrer unsterblichen Liebe für den Fremden Ausdruck verleiht. Der Graf von Luna tritt nun auf, um mit der von ihm begehrten Leonora zu sprechen, wird jedoch – magischer Moment – von der Stimme ihres Geliebten Manrico unterbrochen, der mit romantischen Worten in einer typisch Verdischen Kantilene sein untröstliches Herz besingt. Für kurze Zeit verwechselt Leonora die beiden Männer miteinander, doch dann erklären sie und Manrico verzückt ihre Liebe, während Luna den Briganten öffentlich anklagt

– all dies in einem stürmischen Trio. Die Positionen der in dieses Liebesdreieck Verstrickten sind damit in bewundernswerter Knappheit skizziert, und die Szene für den bevorstehenden Konflikt ist bereitet.

Der von den Zigeunern an einem wilden Ort in den Bergen der Biscaya gesungene "Amboß-Chor" mag vielen Musikfreunden durch übermäßigen Gebrauch zu unpassender Gelegenheit verleidet sein. Erneut gehört, findet er seine Rechtfertigung in seinen klaren Aussagen über das Zigeunerleben. Azucena wird durch ihre beiden kontrastierenden Soli definiert – das erste, hypnotische, beschwört die Verbrennung ihrer Mutter und das zweite, welches allein für die Ohren ihres vorgeblichen Sohnes Manrico bestimmt ist, enthüllt die schreckliche Geschichte ihrer Rache, in der sie unabsichtlich verrät, daß sie ihren eigenen Sohn und nicht den des alten Grafen geopfert hat. In diesen beiden Soli entwickelt Verdi durch die Lebhaftigkeit seiner Rhythmen und Bildlichkeit seiner Textdarstellung Azucenas Persönlichkeit in graphischer Detailliertheit.

Manrico, der verständlicherweise von dem soeben Gehörten verwirrt ist, läßt sich von Azucena bestätigen, daß er in der Tat ihr Sohn ist. In dem anschließenden Duett erzählt Manrico seine eigene Geschichte von seiner

Unfähigkeit, seinen Widersacher Luna zu töten; das eröffnende "Als wir kämpften" (As we struggled/Mal reggendo) ist in seiner mit lyrischer Glut durchsetzten rohen Kraft typisch für alle Auftritte Manricos. Er wird von seinem Kumpan Ruiz unterbrochen, der ihm mitteilt, daß Leonora ihn für tot hält und im Begriff steht, in ein Kloster einzutreten. Dies ist das Stichwort für eine direkte, ungestüme Cabaletta.

Wir finden uns nun in den Klostergarten versetzt, wo der verräterische Luna plant, Leonora zu entführen. Ihm fällt die einstmals berühmteste Nummer des Werks zu, "In den Sternen" (In the stars/Il balen), in der er sich über Leonoras Reize ausläßt. Diese Arie mit ihrem feingewirkten Ausdruck glühender Inbrunst, ist in der Tat ein Geschenk für jeden Bariton. In einer feurigen Cabaletta enthüllt Luna seinen wahren Charakter – essentieller musikalischer Ausdruck der mittleren Schaffensperiode Verdis.

Die Schlußszene vom Zweiten Teil ist meisterhaft. Zunächst schafft Verdi einen fesselnden Kontrast zwischen den Verwünschungen des Grafen und der sich hoch aufschwingenden Melodie des Chors der Nonnen. Wir leiden und fühlen mit Leonora, als sie Inez Lebewohl sagt (Verdischer

Rezitativstil größter Eloquenz), bevor der Graf sie zu greifen versucht. Alle sind von Manricos plötzlichem Auftauchen überrascht, niemand mehr als Leonora selbst, deren Worte – beginnend "Oh, ist es möglich, kann ich glauben" (Oh, can it be, can I believe/E deggio e posso crederlo) – anschaulich ihre Erleichterung und Freude vermitteln. Das sich anschließende Ensemble ist in bestem Concertato-Stil gesetzt, den Verdi mit jeder Oper mehr beherrschte; jede Figur erhält eine ihrem Gemütszustand entsprechende Phrase, bevor die oben bereits erwähnten Worte der Leonora die ekstatischen Gefühle ihrer Vereinigung mit dem Geliebten zum Ausdruck bringen.

Nach dem kriegesischen Lied der Soldaten zu Beginn vom Dritten Teil tritt die von Lunas Gefolge gefangengenommene Azucena wieder in den Mittelpunkt des Geschehens und erzählt ihnen in den klagenden Tönen des bewegenden Solos "Auch wenn mein Leben arm war" (Though my life was poor/Giorni poveri) von ihrer mißlichen Lage. Sie enthüllt jedoch ein bißchen zuviel von ihrer Vergangenheit und wird von ihren Fängern in Ketten gelegt; nun bricht sie in eine verzweifelte Cabaletta aus, in der sie Manrico um Rettung anruft, während der Graf schon



bei dem Gedanken an seine doppelte Rache frohlockt. Auch hier wieder ist Verdis Musik absolut überzeugend und der vokale und rhythmische Kontrapunkt sind der Situation vollauf angemessen und von bewundernswerter Knappheit – so vieles kommt in so kurzer Zeit zum Ausdruck.

In der nächsten Szene kehren wir zu den Liebenden zurück. In einem Rezitativ und einer Arie verleiht Manrico seinem zugleich romantischen und heroischen Charakter Ausdruck. Sodann singen er und Leonora ein exquisites Duett, in dem sie den Plan fassen, zu heiraten (man vergleiche einen ähnlichen Moment flüchtigen Glücks für die Liebenden in Akt II von *Ernani*), bevor Ruiz ihnen von Azucenas Gefangennahme und den Plänen zu ihrer Verbrennung auf dem Scheiterhaufen berichtet. Manrico eilt zu ihrer Rettung, zuvor singt er jedoch seine aufpeitschende Cabaletta “Dies grimmige Inferno” (That fierce inferno/Di quella pira) – mit ihren hohen Cs eine Herausforderung für jeden Tenor.

Nachdem Manricos Rettungsversuch fehlgeschlagen ist, kommt Leonora zum Kerker, um herauszufinden, wie sie ihm helfen kann. In einem ausdrucksvollen *Adagio* “seufzt sie ihre Seelennot in die Nacht hinaus”, wie es der Kritiker Ernest Newman treffend

beschreibt; ich teile allerdings nicht seine Auffassung, daß diese Passage durch die Koloratur beeinträchtigt wird, vielmehr scheint sie die von Leonora zum Ausdruck gebrachten Emotionen noch zu verstärken. Es folgt das berühmte Miserere. Eine Totenglocke ertönt, ein Chor bittet in feierlichem Gesang um Vergebung, Leonora klagt mit in bewegenden Worten, und aus dem Gefängnis betrauert Manrico sein unglückliches Los. Verdi erscheint hier überaus inspiriert, indem er ein völlig neues und aufregendes Konzept entwickelt.

Die allein zurückgelassene Leonora singt eine herzzerreißende Cabaletta darüber, daß der Tod die Liebe nicht besiegen kann. Dieses Stück wurde früher ausgelassen, ist aber für ein volles Verständnis von Leonoras Charakter wie auch für die Struktur der Szene unabdingbar. Sobald sie ihr Herz ausgeschüttet hat, taucht plötzlich Luna auf, der sie zunächst nicht sieht und dessen Solo zeigt, daß er nicht weiß, wo sie ist. Sie tritt aus dem Schatten hervor und fleht um Gnade für Manrico, “Sieh meine bitteren Tränen” (See all these bitter tears of mine/Mira, di acerbe lagrime), indem sie darum bittet, an seiner Stelle zu sterben: ein lebhaftes Duett, in dem Leonora verzweifelt an Lunas bessere Natur appelliert, während dieser

sich in seiner Rachsucht und Lust unerbittlich zeigt. In ihrer extremen Not verspricht sie, sich ihm hinzugeben, wenn Manrico freigelassen wird. Während Luna einem Wächter Anweisung gibt, dies zu tun, nimmt sie Gift. Anschließend singen die beiden die erregte Cabaletta “Er lebt! Vor Glück kann ich nicht sprechen” (He lives! I cannot speak for joy/Vivrà! Contende il giubilo). Die Tragödie nähert sich schnell ihrem Höhepunkt.

Das lange Kerkerduett zwischen Azucena und Manrico zu Beginn der Schlußszene wird von düsteren, mit Todesahnungen erfüllten Akkorden eingeleitet. Azucena spricht wie in einem nebulösen Traum, während Manrico versucht, sie zu trösten; diese Emotionen hält Verdi in bewegten Passagen fest, die sich dem Hörer zutiefst einprägen. Als Leonora auftritt und Manrico zur Flucht zu überreden versucht, begreift er, daß sie sich für ihn kompromittiert hat, weiß jedoch nicht, daß sie Gift genommen hat. Er klagt sie mit heftigen Worten an, doch als ihre Kräfte zu schwinden beginnen, kommt er zur Besinnung. Die rasche Entwicklung des Dramas wird präzise von Verdi gelenkt, der einem genialen Einfall folgend an dieser Stelle eine Wiederholung von Azucenas ergreifender Klage einfügt. Leonora sagt Manrico ein letztes Lebewohl in

der unsterblichen Passage “Anstatt zu leben und seine Braut zu sein” (Rather than live to be his bride/Prima che d'altri vivere) – und stirbt. Luna schleicht herein, begreift das Geschehene und befiehlt, daß Manrico zur Hinrichtung geführt werde. In diesem Augenblick erhebt sich Azucena und erklärt, daß Luna seinen eigenen Bruder zum Schafott geschickt habe. Leonora tot zu seinen Füßen, ruft Luna aus “Und ich lebe noch!” (And I still live!/E vivo ancor!). Mit diesem schnellen Ende senkt sich der Vorhang über ein Opernerlebnis, das nie verblaßt.

© 2000 Alan Blyth  
Übersetzung: Stephanie Wollny

## Die Geschichte hinter “Il trovatore”

### Das fünfzehnte Jahrhundert

Der Held des Schauspiels *El trovador* von Antonio Garcia Gutiérrez und der Oper *Il trovatore* von Verdi ist eine fiktive Gestalt. Das Gleiche gilt für Leonora, Azucena, ja sogar den Grafen von Luna, obwohl dessen Name an bedeutende Ereignisse der spanischen Geschichte erinnert.

Das Geschehen der Oper hingegen steht in eindeutigem historischem Kontext. Leonora ist

Hofdame der Prinzessin von Aragon und wohnt im Königspalast von Aliafería bei Saragossa. Das Heer des Prinzen von Aragon wird vom Grafen von Luna befehligt. Manrico erklärt seine Loyalität mit dem feindlichen Heer des Grafen Jaime von Urgel, dessen Namen Ruiz am Ende des Zweiten Teils beschwört (Lang lebe die Freiheit!/Long live freedom!/Urgel viva!). Insofern ist die Politik, obwohl sie im Schatten des Dramas steht, durchaus präsent.

Man schreibt das Jahr 1410, und es geht um die umstrittene Nachfolge auf dem Thron von Aragon. Nach zweieinhalb Jahrhunderten katalanischer Herrschaft hat der Tod des alten Königs Martin der Hegemonie der Grafen von Barcelona ein Ende gemacht. Sein einziger Sohn ist im Jahr zuvor gestorben und hat nur einen illegitimen Sohn namens Fadrique hinterlassen, der ein Favorit des alten Königs war, aber für die Kirche inakzeptabel ist. Davon abgesehen gibt es drei weitere hoch gestellte Bewerber um den Thron:

Luis von Anjou, der Enkel von König Juan, Martins älterem Bruder und Vorgänger, ist noch ein kleines Kind und lebt in Frankreich; er wird "der französische Kandidat" genannt.

Ferdinand von Antequera ist der Sohn von Martins Schwester Leonora. Sie hat in die

Familie Trastámara eingeheiratet, die von 1368 bis 1474 das benachbarte Königreich Kastilien regiert. Sein älterer Bruder Heinrich, genannt der Sieche, ist 1406 gestorben und hat als Regentin die Königinmutter Katharina von Lancaster zurückgelassen; Katharina stammt von John of Gaunt ab, dem dritten Sohn des englischen Königs Eduard III., der zwischen 1372 und 1386 immer neue Anläufe zu einem imperialistischen Feldzug auf der iberischen Halbinsel unternommen hatte. Ferdinands Kandidatur ist der Unterstützung eines Teils der Aristokratie und schließlich auch des Papstes sicher.

Jaime von Urgel dagegen geht mit dem stärksten Anspruch ins Rennen. Nicht nur ist er mit Martins jüngerer Schwester Isabel verheiratet, sondern er stammt auch väterlicherseits direkt von Martins Großvater ab, dem König Alfons IV. Martin hatte ihm den Titel Statthalter von Katalonien verliehen, der gewöhnlich dem aragonesischen Thronerben vorbehalten ist. Diese Ernennung ermöglicht es ihm, ein Heer zu unterhalten, nützt seinem Ansehen als potentieller Herrscher jedoch wenig: Er ist als Jaime der Elende (El desdichado) bekannt. Seine Unterstützung kommt aus seiner Heimat Katalonien, von vielen der entrechteten

Adligen und anfangs auch von den Lunas, der Familie des Papstes.

Der Papst bzw. Gegenpapst, denn dies war die Zeit des Großen Schismas, ist Benedikt XIII. Der gebürtige Aragonese, ein arroganter Mann, hieß ursprünglich Pedro de Luna und war Kardinal von Aragon. Er wurde 1409 als Papst abgesetzt, hat jedoch den Rücktritt abgelehnt und sich schließlich auf die Festung Peñíscola zurückgezogen, wo er in prunkvoller Isolation als der exzentrischste der drei rivalisierenden Päpste Hof hält. Er wird 1417 vom Konstanzer Konzil zum Schismatiker erklärt, lebt aber noch bis 1423 weiter.

Urgels Anspruch wird ernsthaft geschwächt, als seine Anhänger (angeführt von Don Antonio de Luna!) den Erzbischof von Saragossa ermorden, das Oberhaupt der aragonesischen Kirche. Daraufhin wird Luna vom Papst exkommuniziert, der seine Unterstützung von Urgel auf Ferdinand überträgt.

Anstelle der traditionellen Königswahl durch die Cortès wird entschieden, einen Ausschuss aus neun Theologen und Juristen (drei aus jeder Provinz) zu bilden und zwischen den Kandidaten entscheiden zu lassen. Der Kompromiss von Caspe, benannt nach der Kleinstadt, wo sich die Grenzen der

drei Provinzen treffen, wird nach neunmonatiger Beratung in Form einer Stimmenmehrheit zugunsten von Ferdinand gefunden.

Urgel nimmt das Urteil jedoch nicht an und tritt den Rückzug in die Gascoigne an, um ein Rebellenheer aufzustellen. Dann marschiert er über die Biskaya-Region in das Königreich ein. Es ist dieser Bürgerkrieg, vor dessen Hintergrund sich *Il trovatore* abspielt. Der Graf von Luna der Oper ist Befehlshaber von Ferdinands Heer. Manrico ist einer der Anführer der Guerillas auf der Seite des Grafen von Urgel.

Urgels Rebellion wurde schließlich niedergeschlagen, und er starb in Gefangenschaft. Ferdinand wurde der unumstrittene König von Aragon. Obwohl er seinen Thron der Unterstützung der Kirche verdankte, setzte er den aragonesischen Gegenpapst Benedikt XIII. bald darauf ab. Während seiner kurzen Regierungszeit beleidigte er außerdem die Katalanen, indem er sich auf kastilische Berater verließ. Dennoch erwarb er den Beinamen "der Gerechte". 1416 löste ihn sein bekannterer Sohn Alfons V. (der Großmütige) ab. Aragon und Kastilien wurden schließlich 1479 vereint, als die beiden Zweige der Familie Trastámara durch die Verbindung

zwischen Ferdinand II. und Isabella vereint wurden.

### Das neunzehnte Jahrhundert

Wer Verdi beschuldigt, sich eine komplizierte Handlung aufgehalst zu haben, darf dankbar sein, dass er so viel von den historischen Einzelheiten aus dem fünfzehnten Jahrhundert ausgelassen hat. Die Kunst schaffte es wie so oft, das Leben zu vereinfachen. Verdi erfasste instinktiv den dramatischen Konflikt, der der historischen Situation innewohnte. *Il trovatore* ist nicht das einzige Beispiel in Verdis Schaffen, dessen erhebliches dramatisches Potential aus dem allmählichen Hervortreten Spaniens aus dem Mittelalter erwächst. Schon in *Ernani* hatte er die Epoche einhundert Jahre später dargestellt, in der die feudale Aufteilung des Landes unter der starken, zentralisierten Führung von Karl V. aufgehoben wurde. Und später sollte er sich noch einmal der spanischen Geschichte zur Zeit von Karls Sohn Philipp II. zuwenden, um seinen *Don Carlos* zu schaffen.

Gutiérrez' Schauspiel hat mehr Gemeinsamkeiten mit Victor Hugos *Hernani* als mit Schillers anspruchsvollerem Drama *Don Carlos*. Die Uraufführung von *El trovador* am 1. März 1836 war ein Erfolg ohnegleichen

in der Geschichte des spanischen Theaters und zugleich das erste Mal, dass ein Dramatiker auf der Bühne erschien, um den Beifall des Publikums entgegenzunehmen.

Der damals dreiundzwanzigjährige Gutiérrez hatte sich als Freiwilliger zum Dienst in dem Heer gemeldet, das Mendizabel aufstellte, um die liberale, konstitutionelle Monarchie der jungen Königin Isabella II. gegen die Ansprüche ihres Onkels, des streng absolutistischen karlistischen Thronprätendenten Don Carlos zu verteidigen. Der Erbfolgekrieg des fünfzehnten Jahrhunderts erlangte dadurch für den jungen Gutiérrez und sein temperamentvolles Publikum eine besondere zeitgenössische Bedeutung.

Und die hatte sie in allgemeinerem Sinn auch für Verdi inmitten der politischen Wirren Italiens um die Mitte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts. 1848 war das Jahr der Revolutionen, und eine davon war der erste italienische Unabhängigkeitskrieg. Sizilien vertrieb die neapolitanische Besatzungsmacht und erklärte sich zur unabhängigen Demokratie. Österreichische Truppen wurden aus der Lombardei und Venetien vertrieben. Neapel, die Toskana, der Kirchenstaat und Piemont wurden zur Niederlegung einer

schriftlichen Verfassung gezwungen. In Venedig wurde die Republik ausgerufen. Der Papst floh aus Rom.

Die Uraufführung von Verdis *La battaglia di Legnano*, seiner wohl unverhohlen politischsten Oper, fand am 27. Januar 1849 in Rom statt. Weniger als vierzehn Tage später wurde Rom zur Republik erklärt. Der Triumph der liberalen Bewegung, als deren Anhänger Verdi galt, war jedoch nicht von Dauer. Im Sommer des Jahres wurde die römische Republik niedergeworfen und der Papst von französischen Besatzungstruppen wieder eingesetzt. Die Österreicher eroberten die Lombardei und Venetien zurück. In Neapel wurde unter dem Schutz Österreichs die absolute Herrschaft der Bourbonen wiedereingeführt. Nur Piemont behielt unter Viktor Emanuel II. seine demokratische Verfassung.

Im Jahr 1852 wurde Camillo Benso di Cavour zum piemontesischen Ministerpräsidenten ernannt. Er sollte der bedeutendste Architekt der italienischen Einheit werden, und Verdi geizte nicht mit Bewunderung für ihn. Cavour forderte Verdi 1861 auf, sich als Abgeordneter im ersten nationalen Parlament zur Wahl zu stellen.

Der zweite italienische Unabhängigkeits-

krieg begann, als Cavour am 23. April 1859 das Ultimatum Österreichs entgegennahm. Er regte sich darüber so auf, dass er nur noch im Zimmer herumhüpfen und mit der Depesche wedeln konnte. Schließlich machte er seinen aufgestauten Emotionen Luft, indem er das Fenster aufriß und aus vollem Hals Manricos "Di quella pira" (Dies grimmige Inferno) sang. Bei dieser Gelegenheit ahmte die Geschichte die Kunst nach.

© 2000 Nicholas Payne

Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller

### Inhaltsangabe der Oper

Schauplatz der Handlung ist Nordspanien in den Provinzen Aragon und Biskaya.

Zwanzig Jahre vor Beginn der Ereignisse hatte der alte Graf von Luna zwei kleine Söhne. Als Don García, der jüngere, unter rätselhaften Umständen erkrankt war, geriet eine alte Zigeunerin, die man an seiner Wiege vorgefunden hatte, augenblicklich in Verdacht, ihn verhext zu haben. Sie wurde festgenommen und verbrannt. Im Sterben rief sie ihre Tochter Azucena dazu auf, Rache zu üben. Bald darauf verschwand der kleine García, und die verkohlten Überreste eines

Kinderskeletts wurden in der Asche des Scheiterhaufens der Zigeunerin entdeckt. Doch der alte Graf war und blieb überzeugt, dass sein jüngerer Sohn überlebt hatte, und verlangte auf dem Totenbett seinem Erben das Versprechen ab, die Suche nach ihm fortzusetzen.

Seither sind Jahre vergangen; das Land befindet sich in Aufruhr. Das Rebellenheer aus der Biskaya kämpft gegen die Königstreuen unter der Führung des jungen Grafen von Luna.

### Erster Teil. Das Duell

#### *Szene 1. Ein Vorraum im Königspalast von Aliaferia*

Es ist kurz vor Mitternacht. Die Wachsoldaten sind müde. Ferrando ermahnt sie, nach dem unbekannten Troubadour Ausschau zu halten, dessen Gesang ständig die Nachtwache des Grafen unter Leonoras Fenster unterbricht <sup>[1]</sup>. Damit sie nicht einschlafen, erklärt er sich bereit, zu erzählen, was er über die Ereignisse um Garcias Verschwinden weiß <sup>[2]</sup>. Er ist überzeugt, dass die alte Zigeunerin eine böse Zauberin war, deren Unschuldsbeteuerungen Lügen waren, und dass der grausame Racheakt ihrer Tochter gesühnt werden muss. Die abergläubischen Männer sind

überzeugt, dass das Gespenst der Zigeunerin nach wie vor im Palast umgeht. Als es Mitternacht schlägt, ergreifen sie entsetzt die Flucht.

#### *Szene 2. Im Palastgarten*

Leonora ist auf dem Rückweg zum Palast noch spät unterwegs. Sie hofft, den unbekannten Ritter zu sehen, in den sie sich wegen seiner Tapferkeit bei einem vor Ausbruch des Krieges abgehaltenen Turnier verliebt hat <sup>[3]</sup>. Sie vertraut Inez an, dass er als Troubadour zurückgekehrt sei und klagende Liebeslieder singe, die durch die duftende Nachtluft an ihr Ohr gedrungen seien <sup>[4]</sup>. Ohne auf die Warnungen ihrer Freundin zu achten, schwört sie, ihm treu zu sein bis in den Tod <sup>[5]</sup>.

Der Graf ist entschlossen, Leonora seine Gunst aufzudrängen <sup>[6]</sup>, wird jedoch vom Klang der Serenade seines unbekannten Rivalen gestört <sup>[7]</sup>. Leonora, die im Dunkeln dorthin eilt, wo die Stimme des Geliebten erklingt, läuft dem Grafen in die Arme. Manrico zeigt sich <sup>[8]</sup>, und der Graf erkennt in ihm einen verurteilten Verräter und Verbündeten des Rebellen Urgel. Obwohl Leonora protestiert, eilen die beiden eifersüchtigen Rivalen davon, um zu kämpfen <sup>[9]</sup>.

### Zweiter Teil. Die Zigeunerin

#### *Szene 1. Ein Lager der Rebellen in den Bergen von Biskaya*

Es ist kurz vor Morgengrauen. Eine Schar Zigeuner bereitet sich mit den Gerätschaften des Schmiedehandwerks auf den anstehenden Arbeitstag vor <sup>[10]</sup>.

Sobald sie von der kürzlich erfolgten Niederlage der Rebellen erfuhr, hat Azucena Manrico ausfindig gemacht, den man für tot gehalten und auf dem Schlachtfeld zurückgelassen hatte, und ihn gesund gepflegt. Nun sitzt sie verdrossen am Feuer und führt sich wie im Zwang immer wieder den Tod ihrer Mutter vor Augen <sup>[11]</sup>.

Nachdem die Zigeuner aufgebrochen sind, verlangt Manrico die ganze tragische Geschichte zu hören. Azucena erzählt ihre Version: dass ihre Mutter von einem bösen Grafen zu Unrecht der Hexerei angeklagt und zu einem grauenhaften Tod verurteilt worden sei <sup>[12]</sup>. Sie selbst sei damals mit ihrem Kind im Arm der Mutter gefolgt und habe sich durch die dichte Menge gedrängt, bis sie nahe genug heran war, um den Fluch ihrer sterbenden Mutter zu hören ("räche meinen Tod"), der sie seither verfolge. Sie habe das Kind des Grafen aus dem Palast geraubt, um es in der neu entfachten

Glut des Scheiterhaufens ihrer Mutter zu verbrennen, habe jedoch, wahnsinnig vor Mitleid, Schuldbewusstsein und Entsetzen, stattdessen ihr eigenes Kind ermordet.

"Wer bin dann ich?" will Manrico wissen. "Du bist mein Sohn!" lügt Azucena, ängstlich bemüht, ihre hitzige Schilderung abzuändern. Als Beweis führt sie ihre mütterliche Fürsorge für Manrico an, dass sie ihn auf dem Schlachtfeld gerettet und sich um seine Verletzungen gekümmert hat. Sie rügt Manrico, weil er seinen Rivalen am Leben gelassen hat, nachdem er ihn nachts beim Duell bezwungen hatte, nur um sich in der nachfolgenden Schlacht von Lunas Soldaten verwunden zu lassen. Manrico versucht, zu erklären, dass ihn damals eine innere Stimme habe innehalten lassen, schwört jedoch, seinen Rivalen nicht noch einmal zu verschonen <sup>[13]</sup>.

Ein Bote liefert ein Schreiben ab. Die Rebellen haben die Festung Castellor erobert, und Manrico soll ihre Verteidigung übernehmen. In dem Schreiben steht ferner, dass Leonora, die ihn tot glaubt, noch am selben Abend ins Kloster gehen will. Ohne Rücksicht auf Azucenas Proteste <sup>[14]</sup> eilt Manrico fort, um seine Geliebte zu retten.

*Szene 2. Im Kloster zum heiligen Kreuz in Castellor*

Erzürnt über seine unerwiderte Leidenschaft und in dem Glauben, Manrico sei tot, ist der Graf ebenfalls entschlossen, zu verhindern, dass Leonora den Schleier nimmt. Er will sie von seinen Gefolgsleuten entführen lassen, damit sie ihm endlich allein gehört [15]–[17].

Leonora hat sich mit ihrer Trauer abgefunden und nimmt Abschied von ihren Freunden [18]. Sie wird vom Grafen überrascht, doch dessen Hinterhalt wird durch das wundersame Erscheinen Manricos vereitelt [19]. Manricos Anhänger entwaffnen den Grafen, und Manrico entführt Leonora.

**Dritter Teil. Der Sohn der Zigeunerin**

*Szene 1. Das Heerlager des Grafen von Luna vor den Mauern von Castellor*

Die Soldaten des Grafen pflegen vor dem Angriff auf den Stützpunkt der Rebellen in Castellor der Ruhe [1]. Ferrando verspricht ihnen reiche Beute, nachdem sie ihn erobert haben. Den Grafen plagt das Wissen, dass sich Leonora in Begleitung Manricos dort aufhält [2].

Azucena wird hinter der Front aufgegriffen und unter Spionageverdacht zum Verhör vorgeführt. Anfangs bekundet der Graf Mitleid mit der armen Zigeunerin aus der

Biskaya-Region und äußert seine Hoffnung, dass sie etwas über seinen Bruder weiß, der zwanzig Jahre zuvor geraubt wurde [3]. Erst als Ferrando sie als wahrscheinliche Mörderin Garcias erkennt und Azucena spontan den abwesenden Manrico aufruft, seine Mutter zu retten, erkennt der Graf, dass er durch sie die Macht hat, sich sowohl an der Mörderin seines Bruders als auch an seinem verhassten Rivalen zu rächen [4]. Man zerrt Azucena fort, um sie auf dem Scheiterhaufen zu verbrennen.

*Szene 2. Ein Nebenraum der Klosterkirche in Castellor*

Obwohl die nächste Schlacht bevorsteht, wollen sich Manrico und Leonora trauen lassen [5]–[6]. Ruiz meldet die Gefangennahme und drohende Hinrichtung Azucenas auf dem Scheiterhaufen. Manrico gesteht Leonora, dass die Frau in Gefahr seine Mutter ist. Er gibt seine Heiratspläne auf und ruft seine Soldaten, um sofort einen Rettungsversuch zu unternehmen [7].

**Vierter Teil. Die Folter**

*Szene 1. Ein Flügel des Palastes von Aliaferia*

Der Rettungsversuch ist fehlgeschlagen. Manrico wurde gefangen genommen. Es ist

Nacht. Ruiz eskortiert Leonora durch die Festung und zeigt ihr den Turm, in dem Manrico gefangen gehalten wird [8]. Sie ist gefasst und zu allem entschlossen [9]. Während ein feierliches Miserere erklingt [10], hört man Manrico ein letztes Lebewohl singen. Leonora beschließt, ihn zu retten [11]. Der Graf erscheint, um die Hinrichtung seiner beiden Gefangenen zu überwachen [12], und ist erstaunt, Leonora vorzufinden. Sie bietet sich selbst als Preis für die Freigabe Manricos an [13]. Während der Graf Manricos Entlassung vorbereitet, schluckt sie Gift [14].

*Szene 2. Im Gefängnis*

Manrico versucht Azucena zu trösten, die immer noch von Erinnerungen an das Schicksal ihrer Mutter gequält wird, das nun sie selbst erwartet [15]. Sie weiß, daß sie dem Tod nahe ist, schläft aber dennoch ein und träumt von den Bergen ihrer Heimat [16]. Leonora kommt, um Manrico mitzuteilen, daß es ihm frei steht, augenblicklich zu gehen, dass sie selbst jedoch bleiben müsse. Erst wirft er ihr erbittert vor, ihre Liebe verraten zu haben [17], doch als das Gift zu wirken beginnt, erkennt er das Opfer, das sie um seiner Freiheit willen gebracht hat [18]. Als der Graf dahinter kommt, dass man ihn getäuscht hat,

und Leonora vor seinen Augen stirbt, befiehlt er Manricos sofortige Hinrichtung. Er zerrt Azucena heran, damit sie als Augenzeugin dabei ist. Da offenbart sie endlich die Wahrheit: "Manrico war dein Bruder! Gerächt bist du, o Mutter!"

© 2000 Nicholas Payne

Übersetzung: Anne Steeb/Bernd Müller

**Alan Opie** studierte an der Guildhall School of Music and Drama und dem London Opera Centre. Noch als Student wurde er erster Bariton an der English National Opera, wo er für mehr als 25 Jahre festes Mitglied des Ensembles war; seit 1996 ist er dort regelmäßiger Gast. Zu seinem Repertoire zählen die Titelrollen in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Falstaff* (nominiert für einen *Olivier*-Preis) und Busonis *Doktor Faust* sowie Don Alfonso, Papageno, Doktor Malatesta, Don Carlo (*Ernani*), Germond, Melitone (*La forza del destino*), Ford, Sharpless, Eisenstein, Doktor Falke, der Spielmann (Humperdincks *Die KönigsKinder*), Valentin, Kowaljow (Schostakowitsch, *Die Nase*) und Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*). Er hatte Engagements an allen großen britischen Opernhäusern und in ganz Europa (darunter die Bayerische Staatsoper, die Wiener Staatsoper

und die Bayreuther Festspiele) sowie in Chicago und New York (Metropolitan Opera). Außergewöhnliche Erfolge waren seine Auftritte als Paolo (*Simon Boccanegra*), Sharpless, Beckmesser (in Bayreuth), Balstrode, der Förster (*Das schlaue Fuchslein*) und in der Titelrolle in Luciano Berios *Outis* (am Teatro alla Scala und dem Châtelet théâtre musical). Neben der Rolle des Beckmesser in der mit einem *Grammy* ausgezeichneten Aufnahme der *Meistersinger von Nürnberg* unter Leitung von Sir Georg Solti gehören zu seinen zahlreichen Einspielungen *Christopher Columbus* (ein Pasticcio mit Musik von Offenbach) und Offenbachs *Robinson Crusoe* für Opera Rara; für Chandos hat er *Peter Grimes* (für den er den *Grammy* erhielt), *Billy Budd*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Martin's Lie* (Menotti), *Troilus and Cressida* (Walton), *Krieg und Frieden* (Prokofiev) und, in Verbindung mit der Peter Moores Foundation, *Maria Stuarda*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto*, *Pagliacci* und *La bohème* aufgenommen.

Der Baß **Clive Bayley** studierte am Royal Northern College of Music und hat sich inzwischen auf den großen Konzertpodien und Opernbühnen Großbritanniens und im Ausland etabliert; sein Repertoire reicht von

Monteverdi bis Birtwistle. Sein Debüt feierte er an der Royal Opera, Covent Garden, in der Weltpremiere von Sir Harrison Birtwistles *Gawain*, seither ist er dort als Colline, Hans Flotz (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) und José Castro (*La fanciulla del West*) aufgetreten. Zu seinen zahlreichen Auftritten an der Opera North gehören Antinoo (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), Wurm (*Luisa Miller*), Sparafucile, Ferrando (*Il trovatore*), der Mönch und der Großinquisitor (*Don Carlos*), die Titelrolle in *Le nozze di Figaro*, der Commendatore, Sarastro, Biterolf (*Tannhäuser*), der Arzt (*Wozzeck*), Arkel, Kecal (*Die verkaufte Braut*), Ebn-Hakia (*Yolande/Iolanta*) und Sir Walter Raleigh (*Gloriana*); außerdem trat er dort in der britischen Premiere von Verdis *Jérusalem* auf. An der English National Opera sang er Cadmus (*Semele*), Arkel sowie Rollen in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Doktor Faust*, *Wozzeck* und *Billy Budd*. Zu seinen zahlreichen CD-Einspielungen gehören, für Chandos, *Troilus and Cressida* (Walton), *Billy Budd* und, in Zusammenarbeit mit der Peter Moores Foundation, *Don Pasquale* sowie Highlights aus *Boris Godunow*.

**Sharon Sweet** begann ihre internationale Karriere als dramatischer Sopran mit einer konzertanten Aufführung von *Aida* in

München; es folgten gefeierte Interpretationen der Leonora (*Il trovatore*) und Elisabeth (*Tannhäuser*) an der Deutschen Oper Berlin während der Saison 1986/87. Daran schlossen sich Auftritte an der Pariser Opéra (Elisabetta di Valois in *Don Carlos*), in Wien, Zürich, Hamburg und an der Bayerischen Staatsoper in München an. Zu ihren besonders populären Rollen zählen Norma (Théâtre royal de la Monnaie in Brüssel sowie in Rom, Barcelona, Lissabon und Bilbao) und Aida (in der Arena in Verona und 1989 bei ihrem amerikanischen Debüt in San Francisco). 1990 hatte sie ihr Debüt an der New Yorker Metropolitan Opera in *Il trovatore* und ist seither in jeder Saison dorthin zurückgekehrt, unter anderem in *Don Giovanni*, *Stiffelio*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *La forza del destino* sowie in der Titelrolle von *Turandot*, die sie auch an die Royal Opera, Covent Garden, die Opéra national de Paris-Bastille, nach Florenz und in die Verbotene Stadt von Peking geführt hat. In jüngster Zeit hat sie die Aida an der Metropolitan Opera und Ariadne (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) mit dem Israel Philharmonic Orchestra gesungen. Im Konzert ist sie mit den weltbesten Musikern aufgetreten, außerdem hat sie eine Reihe gefeierter CD-Aufnahmen gemacht, darunter *Falstaff* unter Sir Colin Davis.

Nach ihrer Ausbildung am Royal Northern College of Music setzte die Sopranistin **Helen Williams** ihr Studium bei Gerald Martin Moore in London fort. Ihr Debüt an der Glyndebourne Festival Opera feierte sie 1988 als Sashka in Osbornes *The Electrification of the Soviet Union*; später sang sie dort die Emmie in *Albert Herring*. 1994 trat sie auf dem St. Endellion Festival in *Peter Grimes* auf. Zu ihren übrigen Rollen zählen Dalinda (*Ariodante*) und Amor (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) an der English National Opera, Yvette (*La rondine*) und zweite Nichte (*Peter Grimes*, auf Tournee in Finnland) an der Royal Opera, Covent Garden, Naiade (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) und erste Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*) an der Scottish Opera, Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) an der Opera North, Ellen in der Weltpremiere von *Hey Persephone!* auf dem Aldeburgh und dem Almeida Festival sowie Flaminia (Haydns *Il mondo della luna*) an der Opera Zuid in Holland. Ihr Konzertrepertoire ist weitgefächert und zu ihren CD-Aufnahmen zählt, für Chandos in Verbindung mit der Peter Moores Foundation, Donizettis *L'elisir d'amore*.

Die Mezzosopranistin **Anne Mason** wurde in Lincolnshire geboren und studierte an der

Royal Academy of Music und am National Opera Studio; ihr professionelles Debüt hatte sie an der Opera North in der Rolle der Fenena (*Nabucco*) und der zweiten Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*). Ihr Debüt an der Royal Opera, Covent Garden, hatte sie auf einer Fernost-Tournee in der Rolle der Mercedes (*Carmen*); seither hat sie an diesem Haus zahlreiche Rollen gesungen, darunter Marcellina (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Annius (*La clemenza di Tito*), Enrichetta (*I puritani*), Emilia (*Otello*), Suzuki, Wellgunde (*Das Rheingold* und *Götterdämmerung*), Waltraute (*Die Walküre*), Annina (*Der Rosenkavalier*) und Guinevere (Sir Harrison Birtwistles *Gawain*). Weitere Auftritte führten sie an die Welsh National Opera (Dorabella), die English National Opera (Marcellina und Dorabella), die Scottish Opera (Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare*, Sextus in *La clemenza di Tito* und Adalgisa in *Norma*), auf das Glyndebourne Festival und Touring Operas sowie in die BBC Promenade Concerts. Im Ausland sang sie an De Nederlandse Opera (Suzuki), der Oper in Madrid, der Semperoper in Dresden (Penelope in *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), in Batignano (Penelope), am Theater Basel (die Titelrolle in *Giulio Cesare*) sowie auf dem Festival von Aix-en-Provence und dem Innsbrucker Festival

der Alten Musik. Sie ist außerdem eine gefragte Konzertsängerin und hat für Opera Rara unter anderem CD-Aufnahmen von Donizettis *Emilia di Liverpool* und Mayrs *Medea in Corinto* eingespielt.

Der in Wales als Sohn irischer und walisischer Eltern geborene **Dennis O'Neill** ist einer der weltweit führenden Tenöre und ein Spezialist für die Werke Verdis. Er arbeitet eng zusammen mit der Welsh National Opera sowie mit der Royal Opera, Covent Garden, wo er unter anderem den Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Jacopo (*I due Foscari*), Carlo (*Giovanna d'Arco*), Foresto (*Attila*), Macduff, den Grafen (*Rigoletto*), Gustavo, Aroldo, Don Carlos, Radames, Otello, Rodolfo (*La bohème*) und Pinkerton sang. Nordamerikanische Engagements führten ihn an die Metropolitan Opera in New York (unter anderem als Alfredo, Radames, Turiddu und Canio), an die Lyric Opera of Chicago, die Opern von San Francisco, San Diego und Vancouver, das Philadelphia und das Cleveland Orchestra, die Sinfonieorchester von Montreal und Ottawa sowie das Cincinnati Festival. In Europa war er häufiger Gast an der Bayerischen Staatsoper in München, wo Manrico und Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*) zu seinen Rollen

zählten, und sang zudem an den Opernhäusern von Wien, Berlin, Bonn, Köln, Hamburg, Paris, Nizza, Zürich, Brüssel, Oslo, Barcelona, Oviedo, Verona und Turin. Neben Auftritten in Konzerten und im Fernsehen hat Dennis O'Neill zahlreiche CD-Einspielungen gemacht, darunter *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Tosca*, *La bohème* und ein Solo-Recital-Album für Chandos in Zusammenarbeit mit der Peter Moores Foundation. In der Neujahrs-Ehrenliste 2000 wurde er mit dem CBE ausgezeichnet.

Der Tenor **Mark Le Brocq** studierte am National Opera Studio, nachdem er bereits mehrere Preise an der Royal Academy of Music gewonnen hatte. Gegenwärtig ist er Erstes Ensemblemitglied an der English National Opera, wo er unter anderem folgende Rollen gesungen hat: Boggart (*The Fairy Queen*), Odoardo (*Ariodante*), Don Curzio (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Don Ottavio, Tamino, Monostatos, Borsa, Cassio (*Otello*), Remendado (*Carmen*), Rodriguez (Massenets *Don Quichotte*), Nathaniel (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Tonik (Smetanas *Die beiden Witwen*), Missail (*Boris Godunow*), Narraboth (*Salome*), Paris (*King Priam*), Erster Offizier (Henzes *Der Prinz von Homburg*) und Doctor

Maxwell (Turnages *The Silver Tassie*). Als Kammer- und Oratoriensänger ist er sowohl in Konzerten als auch auf Festivals in ganz Europa, im mittleren Osten und in den USA sowie auch in allen großen Londoner Konzertreihen aufgetreten. Außerdem hat er bei mehreren CD- und Videoaufnahmen mitgewirkt.

Geoffrey Mitchells Gesangskarriere hat ihm ein bemerkenswert breitgefächertes Repertoire von der alten bis zur neuen Musik beschert und ihn nach Skandinavien, Deutschland, in die ehemalige Tschechoslowakei, nach Kanada und Australasien geführt. Nachdem er bei der BBC erste Dirigiererfahrungen gesammelt hatte, begann er mit eigenen Sängern zu arbeiten und gründete den **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Aus ersten Aufnahmen entwickelte sich eine langfristige Zusammenarbeit des Chors mit Opera Rara, für die er über dreißig Tonträger aufgenommen hat. Der Chor genießt wachsendes Ansehen und ist bei der BBC und internationalen Plattenfirmen gefragt. Für Chandos hat der Geoffrey Mitchell Choir an zahlreichen Aufnahmen der hervorragend kritisierten Reihe Opera in English unter der Schirmherrschaft der Peter Moores Foundation teilgenommen.

Seit seiner Gründung im Jahre 1932 durch Sir Thomas Beecham hat das **London Philharmonic Orchestra** sein Publikum mit Aufführungen berühmter Solisten und unter bekannten Dirigenten begeistert. Zu den Chefdirigenten zählten unter anderem Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt und Franz Welser-Möst. Neuer Chefdirigent wird im September 2000 Kurt Masur. 1992 wurde das London Philharmonic Orchestra Hausorchester an der Royal Festival Hall, daneben ist es seit 35 Jahren auch ständiges Sinfonieorchester der Glyndebourne Festival Opera. Die Vielseitigkeit und der exzellente Ruf des Orchesters zeigen sich zudem in seiner innovativen pädagogischen Arbeit und seinen öffentlichen Projekten, in seinen zahlreichen preisgekrönten Aufnahmen und seinen bahnbrechenden internationalen Tourneen.

**David Parry** hat bei Sergiu Celibidache studiert und seine berufliche Laufbahn als Assistent von Sir John Pritchard begonnen. Er hat am English Music Theatre debütiert und wurde dann Dirigent mit Festvertrag an den Städtischen Bühnen Dortmund und an der Opera North. Von 1983 bis 1987 war er

Musikdirektor der Opera 80 und seit 1992 Gründungsmitglied und Direktor der Almeida Opera.

Er übt in Großbritannien und international eine weitgespannte Tätigkeit in den Bereichen Oper und Konzert aus, hat mehrere Produktionen der English National Opera dirigiert und tritt regelmäßig mit dem Philharmonia Orchestra auf. 1996 gab er sein Debüt beim Glyndebourne Festival mit *Così fan tutte* und hat dort 1998 die Uraufführung von Jonathan Doves *Flight* geleitet.

Er ist häufig in Spanien zu Gast und hat mit den meisten bedeutenden spanischen Orchestern Konzerte gegeben. In Madrid hat er die spanische Erstaufführung von *Peter Grimes* dirigiert, und 1996 die erste spanische Inszenierung von *The Rake's Progress*. Er ist in Deutschland, Schweden und den Niederlanden aufgetreten, bei den Festspielen in Pesaro, beim Hong Kong International Festival, in Japan anlässlich einer *Carmen*-Tournée und in Mexiko mit dem UNAM Symphony Orchestra. Zu den Neuproduktionen, die er in letzter Zeit dirigiert hat, zählen *Fidelio* beim New Zealand Festival, *Maria Stuarda* am Stadttheater Basel und *Lucia di Lammermoor* an der New Israeli Opera.

Seine Tätigkeit im Aufnahmestudio umfaßt die Produktion von Marschners *Der Vampyr* fürs BBC-Fernsehen und einundzwanzig vollständige Opernaufzeichnungen unter der Schirmherrschaft der Peter Moores Foundation. Darunter befinden sich zahlreiche Aufnahmen des Labels Opera Rara, die mehrere Preise gewonnen haben, beispielsweise den belgischen Prix Cecilia für Donizettis *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra*. Für Chandos hat er die Aufzeichnung von sieben Programmen

mit Opernarien geleitet (mit Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson und Della Jones – die zwei letztgenannten kommen im Jahr 2000 und 2001 heraus), außerdem *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, die preisgekrönte *Tosca* und Highlights aus dem *Rosenkavalier*, jeweils in Zusammenarbeit mit der Peter Moores Foundation.





Richard H. Smith

Alan Opie and Dennis O'Neill during the recording sessions



Richard H. Smith

Clive Bayley and Helen Williams during the recording sessions

### Giuseppe Verdi: Il trovatore

Les âmes sensibles, et j'en suis parfois, prétendent que c'est, bien sûr, dans *Otello* et *Falstaff*, ses derniers chefs-d'œuvre, que Verdi atteignit le sommet de son art. Et parmi les trois opéras écrits à mi-chemin de sa carrière de compositeur, *La traviata* surpasse les deux opéras qui précèdent et qui n'atteignent pas le même degré de perfection. Puis il y a l'opéra épique *Don Carlos*, l'amalgame magique de légèreté et de tragédie de *Un ballo in maschera* et les horizons sans fin de *La forza del destino*. Mais quelque chose dans *Il trovatore* (Le Trouvère) l'auréole de cette séduction unique dans l'œuvre de Verdi. Julien Budden, dans une étude très complète des opéras, le présente comme "sans égal dans l'ensemble de la littérature opératique".

Son verdict est confirmé lorsqu'on entend la pièce: l'énergie primaire qui l'anime, cette mélodie sans fin, son dynamisme réveillent l'imagination à chaque audition. Verdi lui-même semble avoir été captivé sur-le-champ par les possibilités que le drame de Gutiérrez *El trovador* lui ouvrirait comme livret d'opéra. Il offrait en abondance les moments forts dans lesquels son sombre génie se révélait et dont,

parmi les œuvres antérieures à *Il trovatore*, *Ernani* et *Macbeth* sont des exemples. Le personnage de la gitane Azucena et le conflit perpétuel qui se joue en elle, entre l'amour maternel et l'amour filial, lui plaisaient tout particulièrement. Que Verdi ait pensé reprendre son nom comme titre de l'opéra ne nous surprendra point, pas plus que l'originalité, la richesse de l'inspiration du compositeur dans la partie musicale réservée à la gitane.

Azucena plaisait aussi à Verdi parce que, tout comme Rigoletto, elle était une misérable, une marginale. C'est pourquoi il demanda à son librettiste, le poète Salvatore Cammarano, un texte lui laissant une entière liberté d'expression, comme dans *Rigoletto*. En effet, lorsque Verdi recevait un texte poétique à mettre en musique, plus il était étrange, plus il était heureux, disait-il. Cammarano qui eut trop tendance à suivre la structure de la pièce originale n'a peut-être pas répondu tout à fait aux exigences du compositeur, mais son expérience d'homme de théâtre lui permit néanmoins de remettre à Verdi un livret qui enflamma instantanément son imagination

fertile. L'excentrique musicologue et critique, Joseph Kerman, n'avait sans doute pas pris le temps d'étudier la partition en détail lorsqu'il déclara que *Il trovatore* était "une magnifique démonstration de mélodrame peu scrupuleux" et représentait une régression, un retour au "médiocre style ancien". S'il l'avait examinée de plus près, il aurait découvert que, si Verdi se conformait superficiellement aux formes conventionnelles de l'opéra du début du dix-neuvième siècle en Italie, il les métamorphosait subtilement, ingénieusement, pour créer cette fluidité musicale qui représente l'un des attraits majeurs de *Il trovatore*.

Comme le précise Francis Toye, éminent spécialiste de Verdi de la génération précédente, cette œuvre peut être qualifiée de "*Ernani* in excelsis" ou d'"apothéose du bon et du médiocre à la fois, chez Verdi à ses débuts". Mais en examinant les deux partitions, ou mieux encore, en assistant à l'exécution de l'œuvre ou en l'écoutant sur disque, on s'aperçoit que dans *Il trovatore*, Verdi a ajusté les formes, amélioré les textures orchestrales, ciselé et varié les lignes vocales, si bien que, contrairement à *Ernani* (pièce magnifique à sa manière propre, en quelque sorte rudimentaire), pas une mesure ne peut vraiment être retirée sans nuire à sa structure

affinée avec soin. L'étonnant épisode conclusif de la Deuxième Partie qui se termine par une répétition de cette merveilleuse phrase de Leonora, "Descends-tu du ciel" (Have you come down from Paradise/Sei tu dal ciel disceso), plutôt que par une strette formelle, tout comme, bien sûr, la composition de la scène finale, très dense, très compacte – l'une des plus belles chez Verdi –, témoignent des progrès de sa technique. Et en termes purement musicaux, les relations entre les tonalités, la récurrence des motifs et les mélodies qui épousent parfaitement les traits des différents caractères, par exemple, séduisent inconsciemment l'esprit et l'oreille de l'auditeur qui découvre cet opéra captivant.

La Narration de Ferrando, au tout début, parfois considérée comme un passage faible qui a pour seul but d'élucider l'intrigue est en fait un récit fascinant lorsqu'il est bien compris. Elle nous introduit d'emblée au cœur de l'étrange histoire d'une mort accidentelle et de ses conséquences, et de la vengeance dont la gitane errante doit faire l'objet. La scène nous hypnotise par l'insistante répétition d'un motif de doubles croches.

Dans les jardins du palais, nous sommes dans un univers différent, littéralement et musicalement, un univers imprégné de

romantisme et d'amour: Leonora évoque la singulière rencontre d'un valeureux chevalier. Dans "Les étoiles brillaient au firmament" (The stars shone in the heav'ns above/Tacea la notte), la première des inoubliables et déchirantes mélodies de cet opéra, Verdi nous offre un chant d'une éclatante beauté, lui-même couronné d'une cabaletta dans laquelle Leonora exprime son impérissable amour pour l'étranger. Le comte de Luna entre pour avoir une conversation intime avec Leonora qu'il convoite, mais il est interrompu – moment magique – par la voix de son amant, Manrico, qui chante, avec romantisme, son affliction: une cantilène typique de Verdi. Leonora les confond un instant, puis les amants s'avouent leur amour en termes enchanteurs, tandis que Luna dénonce le brigand: un trio impétueux. Les contours du triangle amoureux sont admirablement esquissés et le décor est planté pour les conflits qui s'ensuivront.

Le "chœur d'Anvil" chanté par les gitans dans un endroit sauvage sur les hauteurs du golfe de Biscaye peut sembler quelque peu usé pour avoir été trop entendu dans des circonstances peu appropriées, mais quand on le réécoute, le simple récit de la vie des gitans est sa propre justification. Le profil d'Azucena est esquissé dans les deux solos, très contrastés,

qu'elle chante. Le premier, fascinant, évoque comment sa mère fut brûlée et le second, destiné à n'être entendu que par Manrico, son fils présumé, conte la terrifiante histoire de sa propre vengeance dans laquelle elle révèle par inadvertance que c'est son propre fils et non celui du vieux comte qu'elle avait sacrifié. La vigueur rythmique et le texte finement ciselé de ces deux solos illustrent le personnage d'Azucena.

Manrico, bien sûr perturbé par ce qu'il vient d'entendre, cherche à obtenir confirmation de sa filiation maternelle et Azucena le rassure. Dans le duo qui suit, Manrico donne sa version de son incapacité à tuer son ennemi Luna. Ses premières paroles, "Tandis que nous luttions" (As we struggled/Mal reggendo), sont typiques de toute sa partie musicale: sa véhémence est tempérée par un ardent lyrisme. Manrico est interrompu par son ami Ruiz qui lui dit que Leonora le croit mort et est sur le point d'entrer au couvent. Ceci est l'amorce d'une cabaletta fougueuse, impétueuse.

Nous voilà dans le jardin du couvent où Luna, rusé, projette d'enlever Leonora. Il chante l'air qui, à une certaine époque, fut le plus célèbre de l'opéra, "Dans les étoiles" (In the stars/Il balen), dans lequel il disserte sur les charmes de Leonora. Cet air est un vrai

cadeau pour tout baryton, car il est l'expression d'une ardeur fervente formulée en termes délicats. Le comte révèle sa nature profonde dans une cabaletta enflammée qui est réellement la quintessence de l'art de Verdi à l'époque de sa maturité.

La scène finale de la Deuxième Partie est magistrale. Tout d'abord, Verdi oppose de manière saisissante les imprécations du comte à la mélodie éthérée du chœur des religieuses. Nous souffrons et compatissons à la peine de Leonora tandis qu'elle fait ses adieux à Inez (un récitatif verdien des plus éloquents) peu avant que le comte tente de se saisir d'elle. L'apparition soudaine de Manrico provoque l'étonnement de tous, et plus encore de Leonora dont les premières paroles, "Oh, est-ce possible, puis-je y croire" (Oh, can it be, can I believe/E deggio e posso crederlo), illustrent son soulagement et sa joie. Cet ensemble est un *concertato* de la meilleure veine chez Verdi qui se montrait de plus en plus expert et audacieux en la matière dans ses opéras: chaque caractère se voit attribuer une partie vocale appropriée à son état d'âme et ceci, peu avant le moment où Leonora exprime l'extase d'avoir retrouvé l'être aimé, dans les termes précités.

Après le chœur des soldats en marche, au

début de la Troisième Partie, Azucena capturée par les partisans de Luna se trouve à nouveau le point de mire. Elle se lamente et leur conte avec émotion l'histoire de sa vie "Bien que mon existence ait été misérable" (Though my life was poor/Giorni poveri), évoquant le drame qu'elle traverse. Elle leur révèle son passé un peu trop en détail et se fait ligoter. À ce moment, elle se lance dans une cabaletta désespérée et appelle Manrico à l'aide tandis que le comte nourrit un double projet de vengeance. Verdi est une fois de plus sublime: le contrepoint vocal et rythmique reflète la situation avec perfection et une concision admirable, car en quelques instants filtre un message infiniment dense.

Les amants réapparaissent dans la scène suivante. Un récitatif et un aria permettent à Manrico de révéler sa nature romantique et héroïque à la fois. Puis, avec Leonora, il chante un duo exquis qui témoigne de leur intention de se marier (un même moment d'éphémère félicité est vécu par les amants dans l'acte II d'*Ernani*). Ruiz annonce alors qu'Azucena a été capturée et qu'elle sera brûlée vive. Manrico se précipite à son secours, mais seulement après avoir chanté une vibrante cabaletta "Cet enfer féroce" (That fierce inferno/Di quella pira), avec ce contre-ut très

élevé qui, toujours, met à l'épreuve les talents du ténor.

Comme Manrico a échoué dans sa mission, Leonora se rend au donjon pour voir ce qu'elle peut faire pour le sauver. Dans un *Adagio* expressif "elle laisse s'épancher son âme dans la nuit", selon les termes très évocateurs du critique Ernest Newman dont je conteste l'avis lorsqu'il estime que le coloratur la dessert. En effet, il semble rehausser plutôt les émotions qu'expriment Leonora. Suit le célèbre *Miserere*. On entend alors sonner le glas et un chœur implorer la clémence en un chant solennel. Leonora se lamente avec émotion et de sa prison, Manrico pleure sur son sort malheureux. Verdi est ici au sommet de son inspiration et nous offre une approche du drame entièrement neuve et passionnante.

Restée seule, Leonora chante une cabaletta déchirante. La Mort ne peut tuer l'Amour, dit-elle. Cet air a parfois été omis alors qu'il est essentiel à la parfaite compréhension de l'attitude de Leonora et de la structure de la scène. A peine s'est-elle épanchée qu'elle est confrontée à Luna. Il ne la voit pas, tout d'abord, et soliloque, ne sachant où elle se trouve. Leonora émerge de l'ombre, implore encore la clémence pour Manrico, "Voyez mes larmes amères" (See all these bitter tears of

mine/Mira, di acerbe lagrime), et demande d'être sacrifiée à sa place. C'est un duo ardent: Leonora fait désespérément appel aux bons sentiments de Luna, implacable dans son désir de vengeance et sa convoitise. *In extremis*, elle lui promet de se donner à lui si Manrico est libéré. Tandis que le comte donne des ordres en ce sens à l'un de ses gardes, elle avale un poison. Puis ils entonnent une fiévreuse cabaletta: "Il est vivant! Je ne peux exprimer ma joie" (He lives! I cannot speak for joy/Vivrà! Contende il giubilo). L'effroyable tragédie atteint son paroxysme.

Le long duo du donjon chanté par Azucena et Manrico, au début de la scène finale, est précédé d'accords sombres, annonciateurs de mort. Azucena parle comme en un rêve nébuleux, Manrico tente de la reconforter et Verdi capte leurs sentiments respectifs en des termes qui se gravent dans la mémoire de l'auditeur. Quand Leonora entre et implore Manrico de fuir, il se rend compte qu'elle s'est compromise pour le sauver, mais il ne sait pas qu'elle a pris du poison. Il la dénonce en termes virulents, mais peu à peu, tandis qu'elle chancelle, il revient à la raison. L'accélération du drame est rigoureusement contrôlée par Verdi qui répète – un trait de génie – la poignante lamentation d'Azucena. Leonora dit adieu à son

amant en ces termes: "Plutôt que vivre pour être son épouse" (Rather than live to be his bride/Prima che d'altri vivere) qui, d'émoi, vous font succomber, ce qui sera effectivement son sort. Et ainsi en sera-t-il. Luna se faufile dans la pièce, apprend la vérité et ordonne que Manrico soit conduit à l'échafaud. C'est à ce moment seulement qu'Azucena se dresse et déclare que Luna a fait exécuter son propre frère. Le comte s'exclame, avec Leonora étendue à ses pieds, "Et moi, je vis encore!" (And I still live!/E vivo ancor!). Avec ce rapide dénouement tombe le rideau au terme d'une expérience dramatique qui jamais ne s'émousse.

© 2000 Alan Blyth

Traduction: Marie-Françoise de Meüs

### Le Contexte historique d'"Il trovatore"

#### Le quinzième siècle

Le trouvère, héros de la pièce de Gutiérrez *El trovador* et de l'opéra de Verdi *Il trovatore*, est pure fiction. Tout comme Leonora, Azucena et même le comte de Luna, bien que ce nom évoque certains grands moments de l'histoire de l'Espagne.

Mais l'action de l'opéra se déroule dans un contexte historique. Leonora est dame

d'honneur de la princesse d'Aragon et vit au palais royal d'Aliaferia près de Saragosse. A la tête de l'armée du prince d'Aragon se trouve le comte de Luna. Manrico se déclare fidèle aux forces opposées du comte Jaime d'Urgel, dont le nom est évoqué par Ruiz à la fin de la Deuxième Partie (Vive la liberté!/Long live freedom!/Urgel viva!). Bref, même dans l'ombre du drame, la politique reste néanmoins présente.

Nous sommes en 1410, au cœur de la lutte pour la succession du trône d'Aragon. Après deux siècles et demi de domination catalane, la mort du roi Martin l'Humain avait mis fin à l'hégémonie des comtes de Barcelone. Son fils unique s'était éteint un an plus tôt, laissant seulement un petit-fils illégitime, Fadrique, que le vieux roi aurait volontiers choisi pour successeur, mais que l'église rejetait sans équivoque. Il y avait trois autres prétendants importants au trône.

Louis d'Anjou était le petit-fils du roi Juan, frère aîné et prédécesseur du roi Martin, mais il était encore enfant et vivait en France: il devint le "prétendant français".

Ferdinand d'Antequera était le fils de Leonora, la sœur de Martin. Elle s'était alliée en mariage aux Trastamare qui régnèrent sur le royaume voisin de Castille de 1368 à 1474. Le

frère aîné de Ferdinand, Henri le Souffrant, était mort en 1406, laissant la régence à la reine-mère Catherine de Lancastre, descendante de Jean de Gand, dont la campagne impérialiste dans la Péninsule avait duré par intermittence de 1372 à 1386. Ferdinand avait le soutien d'une partie de la noblesse et le pape finit aussi par se rallier à sa cause.

Mais Jaime d'Urgel était certainement le prétendant le plus sérieux. Non seulement il était marié à Isabelle, la sœur cadette de Martin, mais il descendait directement du grand-père de Martin, le roi Alphonse IV. Martin avait nommé Jaime d'Urgel Lieutenant de Catalogne, un titre habituellement réservé à l'héritier du trône d'Aragon. Si cette nomination lui permit d'avoir une armée, elle n'aida guère à sa réputation de gouvernant: il devint connu sous le nom de Jaime l'Infortuné (El desdichado). Il bénéficiait de l'appui de sa Catalogne natale, de nombreux nobles dépossédés et au départ des Luna, la famille du pape.

Le pape, ou plutôt l'antipape puisque nous sommes à l'époque du grand schisme d'Occident, était Benoît XIII. Aragonais de naissance et arrogant de nature, Benoît XIII, ou Pedro de Luna, avait été cardinal d'Aragon. Il fut déposé en 1409, mais refusa d'abdiquer et se réfugia dans la forteresse de Peñíscola où

il régna dans un splendide isolement, le plus excentrique des trois papes rivaux. Le Concile de Constance le déclara schismatique en 1417, mais Benoît continua son règne jusqu'à sa mort en 1423.

La cause d'Urgel subit un sérieux contretemps lorsque ses partisans (avec, à leur tête, don Antonio de Luna!) assassinèrent l'archevêque de Saragosse, chef de l'église aragonaise. Le pape excommunia Antonio de Luna et abandonna Urgel au profit de Ferdinand.

Plutôt que de confier l'élection aux Cortès selon la tradition, une commission de neuf théologiens et juristes, trois de chaque province, fut mise sur pied pour choisir l'un des candidats. Il fallut neuf mois pour aboutir au Compromis de Caspe, du nom de la petite ville à la croisée des trois provinces, compromis par lequel Ferdinand fut élu à la majorité.

Urgel refusa ce verdict et se réfugia en Gascogne pour rassembler ses troupes et préparer une rébellion. Puis il envahit le royaume en passant par la Biscaye. C'est cette guerre civile qui sert de toile de fond à *Il trovatore*. Dans l'opéra, le comte de Luna est commandant en chef de l'armée de Ferdinand. Manrico est un chef de guérilla, partisan du comte d'Urgel.

La rébellion d'Urgel fut réprimée et ce dernier mourut en captivité. Ferdinand devint le roi incontesté d'Aragon. Malgré le rôle de l'église dans son élection au trône, il n'hésita pas à désavouer Benoît XIII, l'antipape aragonais. Durant son court règne, il offensa aussi les Catalans en s'appuyant sur des conseillers castillans. Il acquit néanmoins le nom de Ferdinand le Juste. En 1416, son fils Alphonse V le Magnanime lui succéda. L'Aragon et la Castille furent réunies en 1479 par le mariage de Ferdinand le Catholique et Isabelle qui scella l'union des deux branches des Trastamare.

#### Le dix-neuvième siècle

Que ceux qui accusent Verdi d'avoir accepté une intrigue complexe s'estiment heureux: le compositeur laissa de côté bon nombre d'éléments historiques du quinzième siècle. L'art, une fois de plus, sut simplifier la réalité. D'instinct, Verdi perçut le conflit dramatique inhérent à cette situation historique. En fait, cette période de l'histoire espagnole durant laquelle le pays émergea lentement du Moyen-Age recèle un tel potentiel dramatique qu'elle inspira Verdi à plus d'une reprise. Déjà dans *Ernani* il avait choisi pour toile de fond le seizième siècle et la réunification des divisions

féodales sous l'autorité puissante et centralisée de Charles Quint. Plus tard il retrouverait l'histoire espagnole pour *Don Carlos*, situé durant le règne du fils de Charles Quint, Philippe II.

La pièce de Gutiérrez est plus proche d'*Hernani* de Victor Hugo que du drame fort complexe de Schiller, *Don Carlos*. La première d'*El trovador*, le 1er mars 1836, fut un triomphe sans précédent dans l'histoire du théâtre espagnol; à cette occasion, et pour la toute première fois, un auteur monta sur scène pour recevoir les acclamations enthousiastes du public.

A l'époque, Gutiérrez n'avait que vingt-trois ans et il s'était engagé comme volontaire dans l'armée levée par Mendizabel pour défendre la monarchie constitutionnelle libérale de la jeune reine Isabelle II contre son oncle don Carlos, un absolutiste intransigeant qui prétendait au trône. Ainsi la guerre civile du quinzième siècle devint un symbole lourd de sens pour le jeune Gutiérrez et son public passionné.

Et, par extension, cette guerre civile devint lourde de sens pour Verdi en ce milieu de siècle, à une époque où l'Italie connaissait une forte agitation politique. 1848 fut l'année des Révolutions, entre autres de la première guerre

d'indépendance italienne. La Sicile expulsa les troupes napolitaines et se proclama démocratie indépendante. Les troupes autrichiennes furent expulsées de Lombardie et de Vénétie. Naples, la Toscane, les Etats pontificaux et le Piémont furent contraints d'accorder des constitutions écrites. Venise devint une république. Le pape s'enfuit à Rome.

*La battaglia di Legnano* de Verdi, son opéra sans doute le plus ouvertement politique, fut créé à Rome le 27 janvier 1849. Moins de deux semaines plus tard, Rome devenait une république. Mais le triomphe des libéraux, auxquels Verdi s'identifiait, fut de courte durée. Cet été-là, la république romaine fut écrasée et le pape restauré par les troupes françaises. Les Autrichiens reconquirent la Lombardie et la Vénétie. L'absolutisme des Bourbon fut rétabli à Naples sous protectorat autrichien. Seul le Piémont conserva une constitution démocratique sous Victor-Emmanuel.

En 1852, Camillo Benso di Cavour fut nommé président du Conseil et ministre des Finances du Piémont. Verdi vouait une admiration sans bornes à celui qui deviendrait le principal artisan de l'unité italienne. Cavour invita Verdi à être député dans le premier parlement national en 1861.

La seconde guerre d'indépendance italienne commença lorsque Cavour reçut un ultimatum de l'Autriche le 23 avril 1859. Son excitation était telle qu'il ne put s'empêcher de danser en long et en large en agitant la dépêche. Pour épancher ce trop-plein émotionnel, il ouvrit grand la fenêtre et chanta à tue-tête et à pleins poumons l'air de Manrico, "Di quella pira" (Cet enfer féroce). Ce jour-là, ce fut l'histoire qui imita l'art.

© 2000 Nicholas Payne  
Traduction: Nicole Valencia

### L'Argument de l'opéra

L'action se passe dans le nord de l'Espagne, dans les provinces d'Aragon et de Biscaye.

Vingt ans plus tôt, le vieux comte de Luna avait deux jeunes fils. Lorsque le plus jeune d'entre eux, Don Garzia, fut frappé d'un mal mystérieux, une vieille gitane, que l'on avait vue rôder autour du berceau, fut immédiatement soupçonnée de l'avoir ensorcelé. Elle fut arrêtée et brûlée vive. Avant de mourir, elle implora sa fille Azucena de la venger. Peu après le jeune Garzia disparut et les restes carbonisés d'un squelette d'enfant furent découverts parmi les cendres du bûcher

de la gitane. Mais convaincu que son jeune fils était encore en vie, le vieux comte, sur son lit de mort, demanda à son héritier de poursuivre ses recherches.

Les années ont passé; le pays est en proie à la guerre civile. Les forces rebelles de Biscaye sont alignées contre les troupes royalistes dirigées par le jeune comte de Luna.

### Première Partie. Le duel

*Scène 1. Un vestibule du palais royal d'Aliafertia*  
Il est presque minuit. Les soldats de la garde sont las. Le capitaine Ferrando leur conseille de rester à l'affût du trouvère inconnu dont le chant interrompt chaque nuit le comte qui veille sous les fenêtres de Leonora [1]. Pour qu'ils ne s'endorment pas, il accepte de leur raconter sa version de l'histoire de la disparition de Garzia [2]. Il est persuadé que la vieille gitane était une mauvaise sorcière qui mentait lorsqu'elle se disait innocente, et que la vengeance insensée de sa fille reste à ce jour impunie. Les soldats superstitieux croient que l'esprit de la gitane continue de hanter le palais. Lorsque minuit sonne, ils se dispersent, terrifiés.

*Scène 2. Les jardins du palais*  
Leonora s'attarde sur le chemin du retour au

palais dans l'espoir de voir le chevalier inconnu si courageux dont elle s'est éprise lors d'un tournoi peu avant que n'éclate la guerre civile [3]. Elle raconte à Inès comment il est revenu sous les traits d'un trouvère chantant de langoureuses chansons d'amour qui flottent vers elle dans l'air parfumé de la nuit [4]. Son amie tente de la mettre en garde mais elle jure de lui rester fidèle, même si elle doit en mourir [5].

Le comte est bien décidé à prendre Leonora de force [6], mais il est dérangé par la sérénade de son rival inconnu [7]. S'élançant dans la nuit vers la voix de celui qu'elle aime, Leonora tombe par erreur dans les bras du comte. Manrico apparaît [8], et le comte reconnaît en lui un traître allié à la cause du rebelle Urgel. Malgré les protestations de Leonora, les deux rivaux jaloux vont sur-le-champ se battre en duel [9].

### Deuxième Partie. La gitane

*Scène 1. Un campement rebelle dans les montagnes de Biscaye*  
Il fait presque jour. Une bande de gitans s'apprête pour une nouvelle journée de travail en prenant les fers du forgeron [10].

Ayant appris que les rebelles venaient de subir une défaite, Azucena a trouvé Manrico laissé pour mort sur le champ de bataille et,

grâce à ses soins, il a guéri. Assise auprès du feu, elle est hantée dans ses songes par l'image de sa mère au bûcher [11].

Les gitans partis, Manrico veut connaître dans le moindre détail cette tragique histoire. Azucena lui raconte comment sa mère fut accusée de tort de sorcellerie par un comte cruel, et condamnée à une mort horrible [12]. Son fils dans les bras, elle suivit sa mère de loin et, s'étant frayé un passage dans la foule amassée, elle entendit sa mère mourante s'écrier "Venge ma mort", imprécation qui depuis l'obsède sans répit. Elle enleva le fils du comte dans l'intention de le brûler dans les cendres ranimées du bûcher de sa mère, mais, affolée par un mélange de compassion, de culpabilité et d'horreur, elle tua à la place son propre enfant.

"Qui suis-je?" demande Manrico. "Tu es mon fils!" lui dit Azucena, essayant par ce mensonge de changer son histoire délirante. Pour prouver son amour maternel, elle lui rappelle comment elle lui porta secours sur le champ de bataille et soigna ses blessures. Elle reproche à Manrico d'avoir laissé la vie sauve à son rival après avoir remporté le duel puis de s'être fait blesser par les hommes de Luna durant la bataille qui suivit. Manrico essaie d'expliquer qu'une voix intérieure retint sa

main durant le duel, mais il jure de ne plus épargner son rival [13].

Un messager apporte une lettre. Les rebelles ont pris la forteresse de Castellor et Manrico est chargé d'en assurer la défense. La lettre révèle aussi que Leonora, le croyant mort, va entrer au couvent ce soir même. Malgré les protestations d'Azucena [14], Manrico part sur-le-champ sauver celle qu'il aime.

#### *Scène 2. Le couvent de la Sainte Croix à Castellor*

Le comte, furieux de voir sa passion repoussée et croyant Manrico mort, est lui aussi bien décidé à empêcher Leonora de prendre le voile. Il a chargé ses serviteurs de l'enlever pour qu'elle n'appartienne qu'à lui seul [15]–[17].

Résignée à son chagrin, Leonora fait ses adieux à ses amis [18]. Le comte la surprend, mais son guet-apens échoue lorsque Manrico apparaît comme par miracle [19]. Ses partisans désarment le comte et Manrico enlève Leonora.

#### **Troisième Partie. Le fils de la gitane**

##### *Scène 1. Le campement du comte de Luna devant les murs de Castellor*

Les soldats du comte se détendent avant de monter à l'assaut des rebelles de Castellor [1].

Ferrando leur promet un riche butin en cas de victoire. Le comte est au supplice de savoir que Leonora est à Castellor aux côtés de Manrico [2].

Azucena est arrêtée alors qu'elle errait derrière les lignes ennemies; on la soupçonne d'être une espionne. Le comte commence par compatir sur la pauvre gitane de Biscaye, dans l'espoir qu'elle saura quelque chose au sujet de son frère enlevé il y a vingt ans [3]. Mais lorsque Ferrando reconnaît en elle la meurtrière présumée de Garzia et qu'Azucena, dans un moment d'inattention, prie Manrico, son fils absent, de la sauver, le comte comprend que par cette femme il va pouvoir se venger à la fois de la meurtrière de son frère et du rival qu'il hait [4]. Azucena est emmenée de force pour être brûlée.

##### *Scène 2. Une salle près de la chapelle à Castellor*

Malgré la bataille imminente, Manrico et Leonora s'apprêtent à s'unir en mariage [5]–[6]. Ruiz leur apprend qu'Azucena a été capturée et qu'elle doit prochainement mourir au bûcher. Manrico avoue à Leonora que c'est sa mère qui est en danger. Il abandonne la cérémonie et ordonne à ses soldats de tenter de libérer Azucena sur-le-champ [7].

#### **Quatrième Partie. La torture**

##### *Scène 1. Une aile du palais d'Aliaferia*

La tentative a échoué. Manrico a été fait prisonnier. C'est la nuit. Ruiz escorte Leonora dans la forteresse et lui montre la tour où Manrico est enfermé [8]. Elle reste calme, mais résolue [9]. Tandis qu'un Miserere solennel retentit [10], la voix de Manrico s'élève dans un dernier adieu. Leonora décide de le sauver [11]. Lorsque le comte arrive pour diriger l'exécution de ses deux prisonniers [12], il est stupéfait de trouver Leonora. Elle s'offre à lui en échange de la liberté de Manrico [13]. Tandis que le comte fait libérer Manrico, elle avale un poison [14].

##### *Scène 2. Dans la prison*

Manrico essaie de consoler Azucena, toujours torturée par le souvenir du destin de sa mère, un destin qui sera bientôt le sien [15]. Elle sait qu'elle va mourir, mais s'endort en rêvant aux montagnes de son pays natal [16]. Leonora arrive et annonce à Manrico qu'il est libre de partir sur-le-champ, mais qu'elle doit rester. Il commence par lui reprocher aprement d'avoir trahi leur amour [17], mais comme le poison fait effet, il se rend compte qu'elle s'est sacrifiée pour sa liberté [18]. Lorsque le comte découvre qu'il a été trompé et que Leonora se

meurt sous ses yeux, il ordonne l'exécution immédiate de Manrico. Il force Azucena à y assister. Cette dernière peut enfin crier la vérité: "Manrico était ton frère! Ma mère, tu es vengée!"

© 2000 Nicholas Payne  
Traduction: Nicole Valencia

**Alan Opie** a été formé à la Guildhall School of Music and Drama et au London Opera Centre. Il fut nommé Baryton principal à l'English National Opera lorsqu'il était encore étudiant et fit partie pendant plus de vingt-cinq ans de la compagnie de l'opéra. Il y est régulièrement invité depuis 1996. Il a interprété le rôle titre dans *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Falstaff* (nommé pour un prix *Olivier*) et *Doktor Faust* de Busoni ainsi que les rôles de Don Alfonso, Papageno, Dr Malatesta, Don Carlo (*Ernani*), Germont, Melitone (*La forza del destino*), Ford, Sharpless, Eisenstein, Dr Falke, le ménétrier (*Die Königskinder* de Humperdinck), Valentin, Kovaljov (*Le Nez* de Chostakovitch) et Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*). Il s'est produit avec les compagnies d'opéra les plus éminentes de Grande-Bretagne et sur les scènes d'opéras de l'Europe entière (notamment à l'Opéra d'Etat

de Bavière, à l'Opéra d'Etat de Vienne et au festival de Bayreuth) ainsi qu'à Chicago et à New York (The Metropolitan Opera). Citons parmi ses succès notoires, ses interprétations des rôles de Paolo (*Simon Boccanegra*), Sharpless, Beckmesser (à Bayreuth), Balstrode, le garde-chasse (*Le Petit Renard rusé*) et le rôle titre dans *Outis* de Luciano Berio (au Teatro alla Scala et au Châtelet théâtre musical). Parmi ses nombreux enregistrements figurent, outre *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* dirigé par Sir Georg Solti (couronné d'un prix *Grammy*) dans l'interprétation du rôle de Beckmesser, *Christopher Columbus* (un pastiche sur une musique d'Offenbach) et *Robinson Crusoe* d'Offenbach pour l'Opera Rara ainsi que, pour Chandos, *Peter Grimes* (couronné d'un prix *Grammy*), *Billy Budd*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Martin's Lie* (Menotti), *Troilus and Cressida* (Walton), *Guerre et Paix* (Prokofiev) et, en association avec la Peter Moores Foundation, *Maria Stuarda*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto*, *Pagliacci* et *La bohème*.

La réputation de la basse **Clive Bayley** qui a été formé au Royal Northern College of Music est bien établie sur les grandes scènes de concert et d'opéra en Grande-Bretagne et à

l'étranger. Son répertoire s'étend de Monteverdi à Birtwistle. Il a fait ses débuts au Royal Opera à Covent Garden dans la création de *Gawain* de Sir Harrison Birtwistle et a ensuite interprété les rôles de Colline, Hans Flotz (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) et José Castro (*La fanciulla del West*). Parmi ses nombreuses interprétations avec Opera North figurent Antinoo (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), Wurm (*Luisa Miller*), Sparafucile, Ferrando (*Il trovatore*), le Moine et le Grand inquisiteur (*Don Carlos*), le rôle titre dans *Le nozze di Figaro*, le Commendatore, Sarastro, Biterolf (*Tannhäuser*), le Docteur (*Wozzeck*), Arkel, Kecal (*La Fiancée vendue*), Ebn-Hakia (*Yolande/Iolanta*) et Sir Walter Raleigh (*Gloriana*). Il s'est aussi produit lors de la création en Grande-Bretagne de *Jérusalem* de Verdi. A l'English National Opera, il a interprété les rôles de Cadmus (*Semele*), Arkel et divers rôles dans *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Doktor Faust*, *Wozzeck* et *Billy Budd*. Parmi ses nombreux enregistrements, citons, pour Chandos, *Troilus and Cressida* (Walton), *Billy Budd* et, en association avec la Peter Moores Foundation, *Don Pasquale* et quelques grands airs de *Boris Godounov*.

C'est en participant à une exécution en version de concert de *Aïda* à Munich, que la soprano dramatique **Sharon Sweet** entama sa carrière internationale. Elle interpréta ensuite avec succès les rôles de Leonora (*Il trovatore*) et Elisabeth (*Tannhäuser*) à l'Opéra de Berlin au cours de la saison 1986/87. Puis elle se produisit à l'Opéra de Paris (Elisabetta di Valois dans *Don Carlos*), à Vienne, à Zurich, à Hambourg et à l'Opéra d'Etat de Bavière à Munich. Parmi les rôles particulièrement populaires qu'elle a interprétés, citons Norma (Théâtre royal de la Monnaie à Bruxelles, Rome, Barcelone, Lisbonne et Bilbao) et Aïda (aux Arènes de Vérone et lors de ses débuts aux Etats-Unis, à San Francisco, en 1989). En 1990, Sharon Sweet fit ses débuts au Metropolitan Opera à New York dans *Il trovatore* et elle s'y est produite chaque saison, depuis, dans des œuvres telles *Don Giovanni*, *Stiffelio*, *Un balla in maschera*, *La forza del destino*, ainsi que dans le rôle titre de *Turandot* qu'elle a aussi interprété au Royal Opera à Covent Garden, à l'Opéra national de Paris-Bastille, à Florence et à la Cité interdite à Pékin. Récemment, elle a interprété les rôles d'Aïda au Metropolitan Opera et d'Ariadne (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) avec l'Orchestre philharmonique d'Israël. Elle s'est produite en



concert avec les musiciens les plus renommés et a participé à plusieurs enregistrements très applaudis, notamment *Falstaff* sous la baguette de Sir Colin Davis.

La soprano **Helen Williams** a étudié le chant au Royal Northern College of Music et a poursuivi sa formation avec Gerald Martin Moore à Londres. Elle a fait ses débuts au festival d'opéra de Glyndebourne en 1988 où elle interprétait le rôle de Sashka dans *The Electrification of the Soviet Union* de Osborne, puis le rôle d'Emmie dans *Albert Herring*. Elle s'est produite dans *Peter Grimes* au festival de St Endellion en 1994. Parmi ses autres rôles, citons Dalinda (*Ariodante*) et Amor (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) avec l'English National Opera, Yvette (*La rondine*) et la Seconde nièce (*Peter Grimes*, lors d'une tournée en Finlande) avec le Royal Opera de Covent Garden, Naiade (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) et la Première dame (*Die Zauberflöte*) avec le Scottish Opera, Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) avec l'Opera North, Ellen dans la création mondiale de *Hey Persephone!* à Aldeburgh et au festival d'Almeida, et Flaminia (*Il mondo della luna* de Haydn) avec l'Opera Zuid aux Pays-Bas. Son répertoire de concert est étendu et parmi ses enregistrements figure, pour Chandos en association avec la

Peter Moores Foundation, *L'elisir d'amore* de Donizetti.

Née dans le Lincolnshire et formée au Royal Academy of Music et au National Opera Studio, la mezzo-soprano **Anne Mason** a fait ses débuts à l'Opera North dans les rôles de Fenena (*Nabucco*) et de la Deuxième Dame (*Die Zauberflöte*). Elle s'est produite pour la première fois avec le Royal Opera de Covent Garden dans le rôle de Mercedes (*Carmen*) lors d'une tournée en Extrême-Orient et a, depuis, interprété de nombreux rôles avec cette compagnie, parmi lesquels Marcellina (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Annius (*La clemenza di Tito*), Enrichetta (*I puritani*), Emilia (*Otello*), Suzuki, Wellgunde (*Das Rheingold* et *Götterdämmerung*), Waltraute (*Die Walküre*), Annina (*Der Rosenkavalier*) et Guinevere (dans *Gawain* de Sir Harrison Birtwistle). Elle s'est produite avec le Welsh National Opera (Dorabella), l'English National Opera (Marcellina et Dorabella), le Scottish Opera (Cornelia dans *Giulio Cesare*, Sextus dans *La clemenza di Tito* et Adalgisa dans *Norma*), ainsi qu'au festival de Glyndebourne et lors des tournées d'Opéra de Glyndebourne. Elle a participé aussi aux BBC Promenade Concerts. A l'étranger, elle a chanté sur les scènes de

l'Opéra des Pays-bas (Suzuki), de l'Opéra de Madrid, du Semper Opéra à Dresde (Penelope dans *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), de Batignano (Penelope), du Theater Basel (le rôle titre dans *Giulio Cesare*), au festival d'Aix-en-Provence et au festival de musique ancienne d'Innsbruck. Anne Mason est une artiste de concert très active; parmi ses enregistrements figurent *Emilia di Liverpool* de Donizetti et *Medea in Corinto* de Mayr pour l'Opera Rara.

Né au pays de Galles de parents irlandais-gallois, **Dennis O'Neill** est l'un des ténors les plus en vue au niveau international. C'est aussi un spécialiste des œuvres de Verdi. Il a noué des liens étroits avec le Welsh National Opera et avec le Royal Opera de Covent Garden où il a notamment interprété les rôles suivants: Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Jacopo (*I due Foscari*), Carlo (*Giovanna d'Arco*), Foresto (*Attila*), Macduff, le Duc (*Rigoletto*), Gustavo, Aroldo, Don Carlos, Radames, Otello, Rodolfo (*La bohème*) et Pinkerton. En Amérique du Nord, il s'est produit sur diverses scènes telles le Metropolitan Opera à New York (dans les rôles d'Alfredo, Radames, Turiddu et Canio entre autres), le Lyric Opera de Chicago, les opéras de San Francisco, San Diego et Vancouver, avec les orchestres de

Philadelphie et de Cleveland, et les orchestres symphoniques de Montréal et d'Ottawa. Il s'est produit aussi au festival de Cincinnati. En Europe, il a été souvent invité par l'Opéra d'Etat de Bavière à Munich où il a interprété, parmi d'autres, les rôles de Manrico et Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*). Il a chanté sur la scène des opéras de Vienne, Berlin, Bonn, Cologne, Hambourg, Paris, Nice, Zurich, Bruxelles, Oslo, Barcelone, Oviedo, Vérone et Turin. Dennis O'Neill est un artiste réputé pour ses succès en concert et à la télévision, mais il a aussi participé à de nombreux enregistrements. Pour Chandos, en collaboration avec la Peter Moores Foundation, il a enregistré *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Tosca*, *La bohème* et un disque d'airs d'opéra. Il figure dans la liste des New Year's Honours de l'an 2000 pour s'être vu décerner le CBE (Commander of the Order of the British Empire).

Après avoir été lauréat de nombreux prix à la Royal Academy of Music, le ténor **Mark Le Brocq** poursuivit ses études au National Opera Studio. Il est actuellement titulaire principal à l'English National Opera où il a interprété notamment les rôles de Boggart (*The Fairy Queen*), Odoardo (*Ariodante*), Don Curzio

(*Le nozze di Figaro*), Don Ottavio, Tamino, Monostatos, Borsa, Cassio (*Otello*), Remendado (*Carmen*), Rodriguez (*Don Quichotte* de Massenet), Nathaniel (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Tonik (*Les Deux Veuves* de Smetana), Missail (*Boris Godounov*), Narraboth (*Salome*), Paris (*King Priam*), le Premier Officier (*Dr Prinz von Homburg* de Henze) et Dr Maxwell (dans *The Silver Tassie* de Turnage). Il s'est produit en soliste en récital ainsi que dans des oratorios lors de divers concerts ou festivals en Europe, au Moyen-Orient, aux Etats-Unis et dans les principales salles de concert de Londres. Il a réalisé de nombreux enregistrements y compris des enregistrements vidéo.

Durant sa carrière de chanteur, Geoffrey Mitchell aborda un répertoire remarquablement varié, depuis la musique ancienne jusqu'à la musique contemporaine, se produisant en Scandinavie, en Allemagne, dans l'ancienne Tchécoslovaquie, au Canada et en Australasie. Après avoir fait ses premières armes de chef d'orchestre avec la BBC, il décida de prendre une part active dans ce domaine avec ses propres chanteurs et fonda le **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. L'ensemble travaille depuis longtemps avec Opera Rara pour qui il

a réalisé plus de trente enregistrements. Ce Chœur ne cesse d'élargir sa réputation, travaillant avec la BBC et plusieurs maisons de disques internationales. Pour Chandos, le Geoffrey Mitchell Choir a participé à plusieurs enregistrements pour Opera in English, une série de disques très prisés financée par la Peter Moores Foundation.

Depuis sa création en 1932 par Sir Thomas Beecham, le **London Philharmonic Orchestra** a passionné son auditoire par des exécutions mettant en scène des chefs d'orchestre et des solistes de renom international. Citons parmi les chefs d'orchestre titulaires de l'orchestre depuis lors: Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt et Franz Welser-Möst. Kurt Masur sera le nouveau chef principal en septembre 2000. Désigné orchestre résident au Royal Festival Hall depuis 1992, le London Philharmonic Orchestra a aussi été orchestre symphonique résident au festival d'opéra de Glyndebourne pendant les trente-cinq dernières années. Son œuvre de pionnier en matière de formation et de projets associatifs, ses nombreux enregistrements couronnés de prix et ses tournées internationales qui ont ouvert des horizons nouveaux témoignent

aussi de la variété de ses talents et de sa réputation de perfection artistique.

Après avoir étudié avec Sergiu Celibidache, **David Parry** commença sa carrière comme assistant de Sir John Pritchard. Il fit ses débuts avec l'English Music Theatre avant de devenir l'un des chefs d'orchestre au Städtische Bühnen à Dortmund et à Opera North. Directeur musical d'Opera 80 de 1983 à 1987, il est directeur musical d'Almeida Opera depuis sa fondation en 1992.

Sa carrière, nationale et internationale, est extrêmement remplie, aussi bien sur la scène lyrique qu'en concert. Il a dirigé plusieurs productions de l'English National Opera et collabore régulièrement avec le Philharmonia Orchestra. C'est avec *Così fan tutte* qu'il fit ses débuts au Festival de Glyndebourne en 1996, une scène qu'il retrouva en 1998 pour diriger la création mondiale de *Flight* de Jonathan Dove.

Il séjourne fréquemment en Espagne où il a dirigé en concert la plupart des grands orchestres espagnols. C'est lui qui dirigea la première espagnole de *Peter Grimes* à Madrid et en 1996 la première production espagnole de *The Rake's Progress*. Il a dirigé en Allemagne, en Suède, aux Pays-Bas, au Festival de Pesaro en

Italie, au Festival international de Hong-Kong, au Japon pour une tournée de *Carmen* et au Mexique avec l'Orchestre symphonique d'UNAM. Il a récemment dirigé plusieurs nouvelles productions dont *Fidelio* au Festival de Nouvelle-Zélande, *Maria Stuarda* au Théâtre de Bâle et *Lucia di Lammermoor* avec le New Israeli Opera.

En studio, il a participé entre autres à la production de la BBC Television de *Der Vampyr* de Marschner, dirigeant aussi vingt et une intégrales d'opéras financées par la Peter Moores Foundation. Plusieurs de ces intégrales furent enregistrées pour Opera Rara et primées, *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* de Donizetti recevant en Belgique le Prix Cecilia. Pour Chandos, Parry a dirigé sept enregistrements d'airs d'opéra (avec Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson et Della Jones, les deux derniers devant paraître durant 2000 et 2001) de même que *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, l'enregistrement primé de *Tosca* et des extraits de *Der Rosenkavalier*, tous ces enregistrements étant réalisés en collaboration avec la Peter Moores Foundation.



Dennis O'Neill as Manrico, with Stefania Toczyska as Azucena, in the 1992 Bavarian State Opera production of *Il trovatore*

68

Monica Matthias



Bill Rafferty

Anne Mason, from the cover photo session

69

## Giuseppe Verdi: Il trovatore

Le anime elette, e anche la mia, di tanto in tanto, ci dicono che la più grande musica verdiana è, naturalmente, quella degli ultimi due capolavori, *Otello* e *Falstaff*, nella famosa trilogia popolare del periodo medio, *La traviata* si colloca al di sopra dei suoi due meno raffinati predecessori. Poi ci sono l'epico *Don Carlos*, il magico accostamento di levità e tragedia di *Un ballo in maschera* e la vasta panoramica de *La forza del destino*. Eppure il *Trovatore* ha qualcosa che ne fa un "unicum" della produzione verdiana, "senza confronti nell'intera letteratura operistica", per dirla con le parole di uno degli studi approfonditi di Julian Budden.

Questo giudizio trova conferma ogni volta che si ascolta l'opera: la sua robusta energia, la sua inesauribile melodia e il suo progresso inarrestabile fanno sempre presa sulla fantasia. Lo stesso Verdi sembrò immediatamente conquistato dalle possibilità che gli aveva fatto intravedere il soggetto de *El trovador*, una tragedia di Gutiérrez. La trama presentava in abbondanza quelle situazioni forti che risultavano particolarmente congeniali al suo estro piuttosto cupo (come dimostrano *Ernani* e *Macbeth*, due opere che precedono il *Trovatore*).

Quello che lo affascinò soprattutto fu il personaggio della zingara Azucena, con il suo perenne conflitto intimo tra amore materno e filiale. Per questo aveva pensato di intitolare l'opera con il suo nome, per questo la musica composta per lei è così originale e ispirata.

Verdi fu affascinato anche dai risvolti di emarginazione sociale collegati al personaggio della zingara, che da questo punto di vista somiglia un po' a Rigoletto; perciò chiese al suo librettista, il poeta Salvatore Cammarano, un testo che gli lasciasse una libertà di espressione analoga a quella che aveva avuto per *Rigoletto*. Anzi, dichiarò che quando riceveva dei versi da musicare, più strani e bizzarri erano, più gli piacevano. Forse Cammarano non si rivelò esattamente all'altezza delle richieste che gli aveva fatto Verdi, in quanto era un po' troppo desideroso di seguire la trama della tragedia originale; tuttavia, da esperto di teatro qual era, alla fine realizzò un libretto che subito accese la fertile immaginazione del compositore. L'eccentrico critico e musicologo Joseph Kerman, che definì *Trovatore* "una magnifica dimostrazione del melodramma senza principi morali" e un

ritorno al "brutto stile di una volta", forse non aveva esaminato in maniera abbastanza approfondita la partitura. Se lo avesse fatto, avrebbe visto che, pur seguendo a grandi linee le forme accettate dell'opera italiana del primo Ottocento, Verdi le modificò in maniera sottile e ingegnosa, trasformandole in un dramma musicale dal flusso libero, che è una delle qualità migliori del *Trovatore*.

Come sottolineò Francis Toye, eminente studioso verdiano del passato, quest'opera potrebbe essere un *Ernani* del massimo livello, "apoteosi del buono e del cattivo nel primo Verdi", ma è sufficiente esaminare le due partiture o, meglio ancora, ascoltarle in teatro o su disco, per scoprire che in *Trovatore* Verdi aveva consolidato le sue forme, migliorato le sue tessiture orchestrali e raffinato e variato le sue melodie per la voce, tanto che non si potrebbe eliminare nemmeno una battuta senza danneggiare l'attenta architettura dell'opera; altrettanto non si può dire di *Ernani* (pur meraviglioso nel suo aspetto rudimentale). Ascoltate la straordinaria conclusione della Parte II, che termina, anziché con una stretta, con una ripetizione della splendida frase di Leonora "Sei tu dal ciel disceso" (Have you come down from Paradise); il progresso nella tecnica verdiana è chiaro, come lo è naturalmente

attraverso la composizione attenta, pratica della scena finale, senz'altro una delle più grandi di tutta la musica verdiana. Dal punto di vista puramente musicale, alcuni elementi quali le relazioni chiave, i motivi ricorrenti e le linee vocali adattate a pennello ai loro interpreti coinvolgono immediatamente l'attenzione e l'orecchio dello spettatore di quest'opera avvincente.

La narrazione d'esordio di Ferrando, talvolta ritenuta un passaggio debole, che esiste solo per spiegare la trama, è in realtà un racconto avvincente, se viene compreso fino in fondo, e ci immerge immediatamente nella strana vicenda di una morte accidentale con le sue conseguenze e della vendetta della zingara vagante. Verdi conferisce alla scena un carattere ipnotico con l'insistente ripetizione di una figura di semicroma.

Una volta nel giardino del palazzo, ci troviamo in un mondo diverso, letteralmente e dal punto di vista musicale: un mondo d'amore e di pensieri romantici. Leonora ricorda il suo strano incontro con un valoroso cavaliere. In "Tacea la notte" (The stars shone in the heav'ns above) la prima delle malinconiche e indimenticabili melodie dell'opera, Verdi produce un motivo di bellezza luminosa, culminante in una cabaletta

in cui Leonora dichiara amore eterno per lo sconosciuto. Entra il Conte di Luna per parlare con Leonora, oggetto delle sue mire amorose, ma viene interrotto – momento magico – dalla voce di Manrico, l'innamorato della donna, che da lontano descrive il suo amore e la sua desolazione: una tipica cantilena verdiana. Dopo un momentaneo scambio di persona, Leonora e Manrico si confessano, estasiati, il proprio amore, mentre il Conte di Luna denuncia il bandito, il tutto in un impetuoso trio. I sentimenti dei tre innamorati sono stati magistralmente descritti e il terreno è pronto per i successivi conflitti.

Il “Coro delle incudini”, eseguito dai gitani in una località selvaggia sulle montagne di Biscaglia, sarà anche stato rovinato dall'eccessivo utilizzo in circostanze non adeguate, ma è perfettamente giustificato, con la sua descrizione semplice della vita degli zingari; basta riascoltarlo per rendersene conto. Il profilo di Azucena viene definito in due brani solistici contrastanti, il primo ipnotico, in cui la zingara rievoca il rogo della madre, il secondo rivolto solo a quello che crediamo suo figlio, Manrico, con la terribile storia della sua vendetta, in cui inavvertitamente ella rivela di aver sacrificato il proprio figlio e non quello dell'anziano Conte. In entrambi questi brani,

attraverso il vigore del ritmo e la pittura del testo, Verdi dà corpo graficamente al personaggio di Azucena.

Naturalmente sconvolto da quanto ha appena sentito, Manrico chiede ad Azucena di rassicurarlo e confermarli che lui è davvero suo figlio. Nel duetto successivo, Manrico narra della sua incapacità di uccidere il Conte di Luna, suo nemico. L'inizio di “Mal reggendo” (*As we struggled*) è tipico di tutta la musica per Manrico nella sua energia mitigata dall'ardore lirico. Manrico viene interrotto dal suo compagno Ruiz, il quale gli annuncia che Leonora, credendolo morto, sta per entrare in convento. Questo dà il via a un'immediata e precipitosa cabaletta.

Veniamo quindi trasportati nel giardino del convento, dove è appostato il Conte di Luna, che trama di rapire Leonora. Gli viene assegnato quello che una volta era il brano più famoso della partitura, “*Il balen*” (*In the stars*), in cui si dilunga sulle grazie di Leonora. Si tratta veramente di un gioiello per un baritono, un'espressione di fervente ardore, finemente sintonizzata. In una focosa cabaletta egli rivela la sua vera natura. Questa è la vera immagine del vigoroso Verdi del periodo medio.

La scena finale della Parte II è magistrale. All'inizio Verdi crea uno straordinario

contrasto tra le imprecazioni del Conte e la melodia del coro delle suore. Noi ci sentiamo dalla parte dell'infelice Leonora che dice addio a Inez (recitativo verdiano al massimo dell'eloquenza), prima che il Conte tenti di rapirla. Tutti sono stupiti dall'improvvisa apparizione di Manrico, ma soprattutto Leonora che, in “*E deggio e posso crederlo*” (*Oh, can it be, can I believe*) pronuncia delle espressioni che dipingono letteralmente i suoi sentimenti di sollievo e gioia. Il successivo insieme è un concertato del miglior genere; con ogni opera che componeva, Verdi diventava sempre più esperto e audace nella realizzazione di questi finali. Qui ciascun personaggio ha un motivo adeguato al proprio stato d'animo prima di quella frase di Leonora, di cui si è parlato sopra, che descrive l'estasi della sua riunione con l'amato.

Dopo il coro marziale degli armigeri all'inizio della Parte III, in primo piano sulla scena ritorna Azucena, imprigionata dai seguaci del Conte di Luna. La zingara narra loro la sua situazione, nei toni lamentosi del commovente “*Giorni poveri*” (*Though my life was poor*). Tuttavia rivela un po' troppo del suo passato e viene incatenata dai suoi carcerieri; a questo punto si lancia in una disperata cabaletta, invocando Manrico perché

venga a salvarla, mentre il conte esulta al pensiero di una doppia vendetta. Ancora una volta la musica di Verdi è irresistibile; il contrappunto vocale e ritmico è interamente adatto alla situazione e sfoggiato con ammirevole brevità. Moltissimo viene espresso in un lasso di tempo estremamente limitato.

Nella scena successiva ritorniamo agli innamorati. Con un recitativo e aria, Manrico manifesta la sua natura romantica ed eroica allo stesso tempo. Poi canta con Leonora uno squisito duetto, pregustando le nozze (esiste un momento analogo di effimera felicità per gli innamorati nell'Atto II di *Ernani*), prima che Ruiz venga ad annunciare la cattura di Azucena e la sua condanna al rogo. Manrico corre via per salvarla, ma solo dopo aver eseguito “*Di quella pira*” (*That fierce inferno*), la travolgente cabaletta, con i suoi do di petto che mettono sempre a dura prova la tempra di un tenore.

La missione di Manrico fallisce e Leonora si reca nel sotterraneo per tentare di salvarlo. In un espressivo *Adagio* “*schiede il suo animo alla notte*”, per dirla con la bella espressione del critico Ernest Newman, anche se io non condivido la sua opinione che la coloratura la rovini: sembra invece acuire le emozioni che esprime Leonora. Segue il famoso *Miserere*.

Suona una campana a morto, un coro chiede clemenza in una cantilena solenne, Leonora si lamenta in accenti commoventi e dal carcere Manrico piange il suo infelice destino. Questo è un momento di altissima ispirazione verdiana, che offre un concetto all'epoca completamente nuovo ed entusiasmante.

Da sola, in una straziante cabaletta, Leonora dichiara che la morte non può uccidere l'amore. Si tratta di un brano un tempo omissso, ma in realtà indispensabile per comprendere fino in fondo Leonora e la struttura della scena. Dopo questo brano appassionato, Leonora si trova dinanzi il Conte di Luna, che inizialmente non la vede e canta in soliloquio, chiedendosi dove si trovi la donna. Ella esce dall'ombra, chiede clemenza per Manrico, "Mira, di acerbe lagrime" (See all these bitter tears of mine) e offre in cambio la sua vita. Si tratta di un vigoroso duetto, Leonora fa disperato appello alle qualità migliori del conte, che rimane irremovibile nel suo desiderio di vendetta e nel suo amore. Alla fine, ella gli si promette a patto che liberi Manrico. Mentre il Conte dà i relativi ordini a una guardia, Leonora si avvelena. Quindi è la volta della febbrile cabaletta "Vivrà! Contende il giubilo" (He lives! I cannot speak for joy). L'inarrestabile tragedia sta per raggiungere il momento culminante.

Il lungo duetto nella prigione, alla fine dell'ultima scena tra Azucena e Manrico, viene preceduto da cupi accordi, presaghi di morte. La zingara parla come in un sogno vago, lui cerca di confortarla e Verdi imprigiona i loro rispettivi sentimenti in frasi che si scolpiscono nella mente dell'ascoltatore. Quando Leonora entra e supplica Manrico di fuggire, egli si rende conto che la donna si è compromessa per amor suo, ma non sa che si è avvelenata. L'apostrofa in termini violenti; vedendola vacillare, torna gradualmente in sé. Il rapido sviluppo del dramma viene tenuto sotto stretto controllo da Verdi che aggiunge, con un colpo di genio, una ripetizione del toccante lamento di Azucena. Leonora dice addio a Manrico con una frase mozzafiato, "Prima che d'altri vivere" (Rather than live to be his bride), poi spira. Entra il Conte di Luna, capisce la verità e ordina che Manrico venga condotto al patibolo. Solo allora Azucena si alza e gli rivela che ha messo a morte il proprio fratello. In piedi, davanti al cadavere di Leonora, il Conte di Luna esclama: "E vivo ancor!" (And I still live!). Con questo rapido epilogo, cala il sipario su un'esperienza lirica che non perde mai di freschezza.

© 2000 Alan Blyth

Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

## La storia del "Trovatore"

### Il Quattrocento

Il protagonista della tragedia *El trovador* di Gutiérrez e dell'opera verdiana *Il trovatore* è un personaggio inventato, come Leonora, Azucena e persino il Conte di Luna, nonostante quest'ultimo abbia un nome che richiama alcuni importanti eventi della storia spagnola.

La vicenda dell'opera, però, si inquadra in un contesto storico. Leonora è dama di corte della principessa d'Aragona e vive nel palazzo reale dell'Aliafería, vicino Saragozza. L'esercito del principe di Aragona è comandato dal Conte di Luna; Manrico è un fedele seguace delle forze del suo avversario, il conte Jaime de Urgel, il cui nome viene invocato da Ruiz alla fine della Parte II (Viva Urgel!/Long live freedom!). La politica è quindi presente nel dramma, per quanto rimanga in ombra.

Siamo nel 1410 e si combatte per la successione al trono d'Aragona. Dopo due secoli e mezzo di dominio catalano, la morte del re Martino il Vecchio ha posto fine all'egemonia dei conti di Barcellona. L'unico figlio del re, morto l'anno precedente, ha lasciato solo un nipote illegittimo, Fadrique, favorito dal vecchio re, ma inaccettabile per la

Chiesa. Gli altri candidati di rilievo al trono sono tre.

Luigi d'Anjou, il "candidato francese", nipote di re Juan, fratello maggiore e predecessore di Martino, era ancora bambino e viveva in Francia.

Ferdinando di Antequera era figlio di Leonora, sorella di Martino. Quest'ultima aveva sposato un componente della famiglia Trastámara, a capo del vicino regno di Castiglia dal 1368 al 1474. Il fratello maggiore Enrico, detto l'Infermo, era morto nel 1406, lasciando la reggenza alla regina madre, Catherine di Lancaster, discendente di Giovanni di Gaunt, fautrice di una campagna peninsulare imperialista che continuò a intermittenza dal 1372 al 1386. La candidatura di Ferdinando venne appoggiata da alcuni nobili e infine anche dal Papa.

La rivendicazione più forte veniva comunque da Jaime di Urgel, in virtù delle sue nozze con Isabella, sorella minore di Martino; inoltre lo stesso Urgel era un diretto discendente maschile del nonno di Martino, re Alfonso IV. Martino lo aveva nominato Luogotenente di Catalogna, un titolo normalmente conferito all'erede al trono aragonese. Questa nomina gli aveva consentito di avere un proprio esercito, ma non aveva

fatto molto per la sua reputazione di governante, che gli aveva ottenuto il soprannome di “sventurato”: Jaime El desdichado. Il suo sostegno veniva dalla Catalogna, suo paese di origine, da numerosi esponenti della nobiltà diseredata e inizialmente dalla famiglia dei Luna, la famiglia del Papa.

Il Papa, o piuttosto l'Antipapa, dal momento che questo era il periodo del Grande Scisma d'Occidente, era Benedetto XIII, al secolo Pedro de Luna, cardinale d'Aragona, aragonese di nascita e arrogante per natura. Fu deposto dal seggio papale nel 1409, ma rifiutò di dimettersi e infine si ritirò nella fortezza di Peñíscola, dove regnò in splendido isolamento e fu il più eccentrico dei tre Papi rivali. Fu dichiarato scismatico dal concilio di Costanza nel 1417, ma sopravvisse fino al 1423.

Il caso di Urgel ricevette il colpo di grazia con l'assassinio dell'arcivescovo di Saragozza, capo della Chiesa aragonese, da parte dei suoi sostenitori (guidati da don Antonio de Luna!) Il Papa scomunicò Antonio de Luna e trasferì il suo sostegno da Urgel a Ferdinando.

Invece della tradizionale elezione delle Cortès, si decise di formare una commissione di nove teologi e giuristi, tre di ciascuna provincia, per pronunciare un giudizio tra i candidati. Ci

vollero nove mesi per raggiungere un voto di maggioranza a favore di Ferdinando nel compromesso di Caspe, la cittadina in cui si riunivano i confini delle province.

Urgel non accettò il verdetto e si ritirò in Guascogna per riunire truppe di ribelli. Quindi invase il regno attraverso la regione della Biscaglia. È questa guerra civile che fa da sfondo a *Il trovatore*. Il Conte di Luna dell'opera è comandante in capo dell'esercito di Ferdinando. Manrico è un capo dei ribelli fedeli al Conte di Urgel.

La ribellione di Urgel fu infine sconfitta e il conte morì in prigione. Ferdinando divenne indiscusso re d'Aragona. Sebbene egli dovesse il trono al sostegno della Chiesa, presto denunciò Benedetto XIII, l'Antipapa aragonese. Durante il suo breve regno, inoltre offese i Catalani affidandosi ad alcuni consiglieri castigliani. Ciononostante fu detto Ferdinando il Giusto. Gli successe nel 1416 il figlio, più famoso, Alfonso il Magnanimo. L'Aragona e la Castiglia vennero finalmente unificate nel 1479 quando i due rami della famiglia Trastámara vennero riuniti in seguito alle nozze tra Ferdinando e Isabella.

#### L'Ottocento

Coloro che rimproverano a Verdi il fatto di

aver accettato una trama complicata dovrebbero essergli riconoscenti per aver tralasciato tanti dettagli della storia quattrocentesca. Come spesso succede, l'arte riuscì a semplificare le cose. Verdi vide istintivamente il conflitto drammatico implicito nella situazione storica. Nell'ambito della produzione verdiana, *Il trovatore* non è l'unico esempio delle forti possibilità drammatiche offerte dal lento emergere della Spagna dall'epoca medievale. Già in *Ernani* era descritto il periodo del secolo successivo, in cui le divisioni feudali erano state riunite sotto il forte regno centralizzato di Carlo V. Più tardi Verdi avrebbe fatto ritorno alla storia spagnola all'epoca del figlio di Carlo, Filippo II, con il *Don Carlos*.

Il dramma di Gutiérrez ha più elementi in comune con *Hernani* di Victor Hugo che con il più raffinato *Don Carlos* di Schiller. La prima di *El trovador*, l'1 marzo del 1836, riscosse un successo senza pari nella storia teatrale della Spagna; per la prima volta l'autore fu chiamato in scena per ricevere l'applauso del pubblico.

All'epoca, il ventitreenne Gutiérrez si era arruolato come volontario nell'esercito che Mendizabel stava riunendo per difendere la monarchia costituzionale liberale della giovane

regina Isabella II contro le pretese rivali di suo zio, il pretendente Don Carlos, campione dell'assolutismo. La guerra civile del Quattrocento, quindi, aveva un significato particolarmente contemporaneo per il giovane Gutiérrez e il suo pubblico eccitabile.

Lo stesso si verificò, in maniera più generica, per Verdi nello scompiglio politico dell'Italia di metà Ottocento. Il 1848 era stato l'anno delle rivoluzioni e della prima guerra d'indipendenza. Le truppe borboniche erano state cacciate dal Regno delle due Sicilie e fu dichiarata l'indipendenza. Le truppe austriache erano state espulse dalla Lombardia e dal Veneto. Napoli, la Toscana, lo Stato della Chiesa e il Piemonte avevano dovuto concedere delle costituzioni scritte. Venezia era stata dichiarata repubblica. Il Papa era fuggito da Roma.

*La battaglia di Legnano*, forse l'opera più dichiaratamente politica di Verdi, fu rappresentata per la prima volta a Roma il 27 gennaio del 1849. Meno di due settimane dopo, Roma veniva proclamata repubblica. Il trionfo dei liberali, con cui Verdi venne identificato, fu però di breve durata. Quella stessa estate la Repubblica Romana venne abolita e le truppe francesi restaurarono il potere del Papa. Gli Austriaci riconquistarono la Lombardia e il Veneto. L'assolutismo

borbonico venne restaurato a Napoli sotto la protezione austriaca. Solo il Piemonte mantenne la costituzione democratica sotto Vittorio Emanuele.

Nel 1852, Camillo Benso di Cavour veniva nominato primo ministro del Piemonte. Sarebbe divenuto il principale artefice dell'unità Italia e Verdi nutrì nei suoi confronti una sconfinata ammirazione. Cavour invitò Verdi fare parte dei deputati nel primo parlamento nazionale del 1861.

La seconda guerra d'indipendenza iniziò il 23 aprile del 1859, con l'invio di un ultimatum scritto dell'Austria. Quando lo lesse, Cavour, eccitatissimo, non poté fare altro che saltare nella stanza, agitando il messaggio in aria. Finalmente, per dar sfogo al tumulto delle proprie emozioni, spalancò la finestra e cantò l'aria di Manrico, "Di quella pira", con quanto fiato aveva in gola. In quest'occasione, fu la storia ad imitare l'arte.

© 2000 Nicholas Payne

Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

### Trama dell'opera

La vicenda si svolge in Spagna settentrionale, nelle province di Aragona e Biscaglia.

Negli anni precedenti agli avvenimenti dell'opera, il minore dei due figli maschi del vecchio Conte di Luna, Don Garzia, si era misteriosamente ammalato. Vicino alla sua culla era stata vista aggirarsi una vecchia zingara, che era stata subito sospettata di averlo stregato, arrestata e arsa viva. Con le sue ultime parole, la donna aveva chiesto a sua figlia Azucena di vendicarla. Poco dopo Garzia era scomparso e tra le ceneri del rogo della zingara erano stati rinvenuti i resti carbonizzati dello scheletro di un bambino. Ma il vecchio conte era rimasto convinto che il figlio minore fosse sopravvissuto e, in punto di morte, aveva chiesto al proprio erede di continuare a cercarlo.

Sono passati vent'anni e il paese è ormai dilaniato dalla guerra civile. Le forze dei ribelli di Biscaglia sono schierate contro le truppe realiste guidate dal giovane Conte di Luna.

### Parte I. Il duello

#### *Scena 1. Atrio nel palazzo dell'Aliaferia*

È quasi mezzanotte. Gli uomini che fanno da sentinella sono stanchi. Ferrando li ammonisce di avvistare lo sconosciuto trovatore il cui canto interrompe la veglia notturna del conte sotto la finestra di Leonora [1]. Per tenerli svegli, accetta di narrare la sua versione degli

avvenimenti collegati alla scomparsa di Garzia [2]. Ferrando è certo che la vecchia zingara fosse una strega malvagia, che le sue proteste di innocenza fossero menzogne e che la folle vendetta di sua figlia fosse rimasta impunita. Gli uomini, superstiziosi, credono che lo spirito della zingara frequenti ancora il palazzo. Allo scoccare della mezzanotte, si disperdono, terrorizzati.

#### *Scena 2. Giardini del palazzo*

Di ritorno al palazzo, Leonora si attarda, nella speranza di vedere lo sconosciuto cavaliere di cui si è innamorata per il coraggio da lui manifestato in occasione di un torneo precedente all'inizio della guerra civile [3]. Racconta a Inez che il cavaliere è ritornato e ha assunto l'identità di un trovatore; le sue meste canzoni d'amore arrivano fino a lei nell'aria profumata della sera [4]. Nonostante gli avvertimenti dell'amica, giura di restargli fedele, anche se questo dovesse costarle la vita [5].

Il Conte è deciso a imporsi a Leonora [6] ma viene disturbato dagli accordi della serenata del suo sconosciuto rivale [7]. Precipitandosi verso la voce del suo innamorato nell'oscurità, Leonora finisce per errore tra le braccia del Conte. Manrico si

rivela [8] e il Conte lo riconosce: è un traditore condannato, alleato del ribelle Urgel. Nonostante le proteste di Leonora, i due rivali gelosi si allontanano per sfidarsi a duello [9].

### Parte II. La gitana

#### *Scena 1. Accampamento dei ribelli sulle montagne di Biscaglia*

Albeggia. Un gruppo di zingari si prepara ad un altro giorno di lavoro con le incudini [10].

Informata dell'ultima sconfitta dei ribelli, Azucena ha trovato Manrico come morto sul campo di battaglia e lo ha curato. Adesso medita accanto al fuoco e rivive ossessivamente la scena del supplizio della madre [11].

Gli zingari se ne vanno e Manrico chiede di conoscere la tragica storia al completo. Azucena gli racconta che sua madre era stata falsamente accusata di stregoneria da un malvagio Conte e condannata a una morte terribile [12]. Azucena stessa aveva seguito la madre a distanza, con il proprio figlio in braccio, e si era fatta strada a stento tra la folla, avvicinandosi abbastanza da sentire la maledizione della madre morente, "Mi vendica"; quelle parole non l'hanno più l'abbandonata. Aveva rapito il figlio del Conte dal palazzo per bruciarlo tra i carboni riaccesi del rogo della madre morente, ma, resa folle



dal dolore, dal senso di colpa e dall'orrore, aveva invece ucciso il proprio bambino.

“E chi son io?” chiede Manrico. “Tu sei mio figlio!” mente Azucena, tentando ansiosamente di cambiare la sua storia appassionata e adducendo come prova le sue cure materne e il fatto che lo abbia salvato dal campo di battaglia e curato le sue ferite. La donna rimprovera Manrico di aver risparmiato la vita del suo rivale la notte che lo aveva battuto a duello, solo per farsi ferire dagli uomini del Conte di Luna nella battaglia successiva. Manrico cerca di spiegare che una voce interna gli ha trattenuto la mano in quell'occasione, ma giura che non risparmierà un'altra volta il suo rivale [13].

Un messo consegna una lettera. I ribelli hanno preso la fortezza di Castellor e Manrico deve difenderla. La lettera aggiunge che Leonora, credendolo morto, sta per entrare in convento quella sera stessa. Nonostante le proteste di Azucena [14], Manrico si precipita a salvare la sua innamorata.

#### *Scena 2. Il chiostro della Croce a Castellor*

Il Conte, infuriato nel vedere respinta la sua passione e convinto che Manrico sia morto, è anche lui deciso a impedire a Leonora di prendere il velo. Ha organizzato un tentativo

di rapimento con i suoi seguaci perché la donna possa appartenere solo a lui [15]–[17].

Rassegnata nel suo dolore, Leonora dice addio alle sue amiche [18]. Viene sorpresa dal Conte, ma l'agguato viene sventato dalla miracolosa comparsa di Manrico [19]. I suoi seguaci disarmano il Conte e Manrico rapisce Leonora.

### **Parte III. Il figlio della zingara**

#### *Scena 1. L'accampamento del Conte di Luna fuori dalle mura di Castellor*

I soldati del Conte si riposano prima del previsto attacco alle postazioni dei ribelli a Castellor [1]. Ferrando promette loro un ricco bottino con il saccheggio. Il Conte è tormentato dal pensiero che Leonora si trova lì con Manrico [2].

Azucena viene scoperta mentre si aggira dietro le linee e viene portata dentro per essere interrogata; è sospettata di essere una spia. Inizialmente il Conte dimostra una certa solidarietà per la povera zingara di Biscaglia e spera che possa sapere qualcosa del fratello rapito vent'anni prima [3]. Solo quando Ferrando riconosce in lei la sospetta assassina di Garzia e Azucena inavvertitamente fa appello all'assente Manrico perché salvi sua madre il Conte si rende conto che attraverso

di lei ha il potere di vendicarsi sia dell'assassina di suo fratello sia dell'odiato rivale [4]. Azucena viene trascinata via per essere arsa viva.

#### *Scena 2. Sala adiacente alla cappella di Castellor*

Nonostante la battaglia sia sempre più vicina, Manrico e Leonora stanno per sposarsi [5]–[6]. Ruiz riferisce che Azucena è stata catturata e che la sua esecuzione sul rogo è imminente. Manrico confessa a Leonora che è sua madre ad essere in pericolo. Sospende il matrimonio e chiama i suoi soldati per tentare subito di salvarla [7].

### **Parte IV. Il supplizio**

#### *Scena 1. Un'ala del palazzo dell'Aliaferia*

Il tentativo è fallito. Manrico è stato catturato. È notte. Ruiz accompagna Leonora all'interno della fortezza e le indica la torre in cui si trova imprigionato il trovatore [8]. La donna manifesta una tranquilla determinazione [9]. Mentre viene intonato un solenne Miserere [10] si sente la voce di Manrico che canta un ultimo addio. Leonora decide di salvarlo [11]. Arriva il Conte per controllare i preparativi per l'esecuzione dei suoi due prigionieri [12] e rimane stupito di trovare Leonora. La donna si offre a lui in cambio della liberazione di

Manrico [13]. Mentre il Conte dà ordine che Manrico venga liberato, si avvelena [14].

#### *Scena 2. Nella prigione*

Manrico tenta di consolare Azucena, ancora tormentata dal ricordo del destino della madre che adesso attende anche lei [15]. La donna sa di essere vicina a morire, ma si addormenta sognando i monti della sua patria [16]. Entra Leonora per dire a Manrico che è libero di andarsene subito, ma che lei deve restare. All'inizio il trovatore la rimprovera amaramente di aver tradito il loro amore [17] ma il veleno comincia a fare effetto ed egli capisce che la donna si è sacrificata per salvarlo [18]. Quando il Conte scopre che è stato ingannato e che Leonora sta morendo davanti ai suoi occhi, ordina l'immediata esecuzione di Manrico e trascina Azucena a testimoniarla con i propri occhi. La zingara rivela finalmente la verità: “Egl'era tuo fratello! Sei vendicata, o madre!”

© 2000 Nicholas Payne

Traduzione: Emanuela Guastella

Alan Opie ha studiato presso la Guildhall School of Music and Drama e il London Opera Centre. Prima ancora di terminare gli

studi è diventato baritono solista presso l'English National Opera ed è stato membro della compagnia per oltre venticinque anni; dal 1996 è suo ospite regolare. Il suo repertorio comprende i ruoli di protagonista *en titre* del *Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Falstaff* (candidato a un premio *Olivier*) e *Doktor Faust* di Busoni, oltre a quelli di Don Alfonso, Papageno, Dr. Malatesta, Don Carlo (*Ernani*), Germont, Melitone (*La forza del destino*), Ford, Sharpless, Eisenstein, Dr Falke, il violinista (*Die Königskinder* di Humperdinck), Valentin, Kovaliov (*Il naso* di Šostakovič) e Balstrode (*Peter Grimes*). È comparso con le principali compagnie operistiche britanniche e nei teatri lirici di tutta Europa (tra cui l'Opera nazionale della Baviera di Monaco, l'Opera nazionale di Vienna e il festival di Bayreuth), oltre che a Chicago e a New York (Metropolitan Opera). Tra suoi successi più significativi vanno ricordati Paolo (*Simon Boccanegra*), Sharpless, Beckmesser (a Bayreuth), Balstrode, il guardacaccia (*La piccola volpe astuta*) e il ruolo di protagonista in *Outis* di Luciano Berio (al Teatro alla Scala e al Châtelet théâtre musical). Oltre al ruolo di Beckmesser nella registrazione di *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* diretta da Sir Georg Solti e premiata con un

*Grammy*, le sue numerose incisioni comprendono, per Opera Rara, *Christopher Columbus* (un *pastiche* di musiche di Offenbach) e *Robinson Crusoe* di Offenbach; per Chandos *Peter Grimes* (che ha vinto un premio *Grammy*), *Billy Budd*, *The Rape of Lucretia*, *Martin's Lie* (Menotti), *Troilus and Cressida* (Walton), *Guerra e pace* (Prokof'ev) e, in associazione con la Peter Moores Foundation, *Maria Stuarda*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, *Rigoletto*, *Pagliacci* e *La bohème*.

Il basso Clive Bayley ha studiato presso il Royal Northern College of Music, si è affermato nei principali teatri concertistici e lirici della Gran Bretagna ed esteri e ha sviluppato un repertorio che va da Monteverdi a Birtwistle. Ha esordito con la Royal Opera, Covent Garden nella prima mondiale di *Gawain* di Sir Harrison Birtwistle e in seguito è comparso nelle vesti di Colline, Hans Flotz (*Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*) e José Castro (*La fanciulla del West*). I suoi numerosi ruoli interpretati con Opera North comprendono Antinoo (*Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), Wurm (*Luisa Miller*), Sparafucile, Ferrando (*Il trovatore*), il Monaco e il grande Inquisitore (*Don Carlos*), il ruolo di protagonista *en titre* in *Le nozze di Figaro*, il Commendatore,

Sarastro, Biterolf (*Tannhäuser*), il Dottore (*Wozzeck*), Arkel, Kecal (*La sposa venduta*), Ebn-Hakia (*Yolandellolanta*) e Sir Walter Raleigh (*Gloriana*) oltre a comparire nella prima britannica della *Jérusalem* di Verdi. Per English National Opera ha interpretato i ruoli di Cadmus (*Semele*), Arkel e ruoli in *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*, *Doktor Faust*, *Wozzeck* e *Billy Budd*. Le sue numerose registrazioni comprendono, per Chandos, *Troilus and Cressida* (Walton), *Billy Budd* e, in associazione con la Peter Moores Foundation, *Don Pasquale* e *Boris Godunov* (momenti salienti).

Sharon Sweet, soprano drammatico, ha iniziato la sua carriera internazionale con un'interpretazione in concerto di *Aida* a Monaco e ha continuato con interpretazioni di successo dei ruoli di Leonora (*Il trovatore*) ed Elisabeth (*Tannhäuser*) alla Deutsche Oper di Berlino durante la stagione 1986/87. Seguivano delle apparizioni all'Opéra di Parigi (Elisabetta di Valois nel *Don Carlos*), Vienna, Zurigo, Amburgo e l'Opera nazionale della Baviera di Monaco. I suoi ruoli di particolare successo comprendono Norma (Théâtre royal de la Monnaie di Bruxelles, Roma, Barcellona, Lisbona e Bilbao) e Aida (Arena di Verona e San Francisco, in cui ha esordito nel 1989).

Nel 1990 ha esordito alla Metropolitan Opera di New York ne *Il trovatore* e qui ha fatto ritorno ogni stagione, interpretando, tra l'altro, *Don Giovanni*, *Stiffelio*, *Un ballo in maschera*, *La forza del destino* e il ruolo di protagonista di *Turandot*, che ha cantato anche alla Royal Opera, Covent Garden, l'Opéra national de Paris-Bastille, a Firenze e nella Città proibita di Beijing. Ultimamente ha cantato Aida al Metropolitan e Ariadne (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) con l'Orchestra Filarmonica di Israele. È comparsa in concerto con i principali musicisti del mondo e ha al suo attivo una ricca e apprezzata discografia, che comprende *Falstaff* per la direzione di Sir Colin Davis.

Dopo aver studiato canto presso il Royal Northern College of Music, il soprano Helen Williams ha frequentato le lezioni di perfezionamento di Gerald Martin Moore a Londra. Ha esordito alla Festival Opera di Glyndebourne nel 1988 nelle vesti di Sashka in *The Electrification of the Soviet Union* di Osborne, e vi ha fatto ritorno per cantare il ruolo di Emmie in *Albert Herring*. È apparsa in *Peter Grimes* al Festival di St Endellion nel 1994. Tra gli altri ruoli vanno ricordati Dalinda (*Ariodante*) e Amor (*Orfeo ed Euridice*) con l'English National Opera; Yvette

(*La rondine*) e Seconda Nipote (*Peter Grimes* in tournée in Finlandia) con la Royal Opera, Covent Garden; Naiade (*Ariadne auf Naxos*) e Prima Signora (*Die Zauberflöte*) con la Scottish Opera; Helena (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*) con Opera North; Ellen nella prima mondiale di *Hey Persephone!* ai festival di Aldeburgh e Almeida; infine, Flaminia (*Il mondo della luna* di Haydn) con Opera Zuid in Olanda. Ha un vasto repertorio concertistico e le sue registrazioni comprendono *L'elisir d'amore* di Donizetti per l'etichetta Chandos in associazione con la Peter Moores Foundation.

Nata nella regione del Lincolnshire, dopo aver studiato presso la Royal Academy of Music e il National Opera Studio, **Anne Mason**, mezzosoprano, ha fatto il suo esordio da professionista con Opera North nelle vesti di Fenena (*Nabucco*) e della seconda damigella (*Die Zauberflöte*). Ha esordito alla Royal Opera, Covent Garden, nel ruolo di Mercedes (*Carmen*) in una tournée dell'Estremo Oriente. Da allora ha interpretato numerosi ruoli per la compagnia, tra cui Marcellina (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Annus (*La clemenza di Tito*), Enrichetta (*I puritani*), Emilia (*Otello*), Suzuki, Wellgunde (*Das Rheingold* e *Götterdämmerung*), Waltraute (*Die Walküre*),

Annina (*Der Rosenkavalier*) e Guinevere (*Gawain* di Sir Harrison Birtwistle). Inoltre è comparsa con la Welsh National Opera (Dorabella), l'English National Opera (Marcellina e Dorabella), la Scottish Opera (Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare*, Sextus ne *La clemenza di Tito* e Adalgisa in *Norma*), il Festival e la Touring Opera di Glyndebourne e ha partecipato ai Promenade Concerts della BBC. All'estero ha cantato all'Opera dei Paesi Bassi (Suzuki), nei teatri lirici di Madrid, Semper di Dresda (Penelope ne *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria*), Batignano (Penelope), al Theater Basel (ruolo di protagonista nel *Giulio Cesare*), al Festival di Aix-en-Provence e al Festival di Musica antica di Innsbruck. Svolge molti concerti e la sua discografia comprende *Emilia di Liverpool* di Donizetti e *Medea in Corinto* di Mayr per Opera Rara.

Nato in Galles da padre irlandese e madre gallese, **Dennis O'Neill** è un tenore di levatura mondiale, specialista verdiano. Ha uno stretto rapporto con la Welsh National Opera e con la Royal Opera, Covent Garden, con cui ha cantato numerosi ruoli, tra cui Edgardo (*Lucia di Lammermoor*), Jacopo (*I due Foscari*), Carlo (*Giovanna d'Arco*) Foresto (*Attila*), Macduff (*Macbeth*), il Duca (*Rigoletto*), Gustavo,

Aroldo, Don Carlo, Radamés, Otello, Rodolfo (*La bohème*) e Pinkerton. Gli impegni nell'America del nord lo hanno portato sulle scene della Metropolitan Opera di New York (nei ruoli di Alfredo, Radamés, Turiddu e Canio, tra gli altri), della Lyric Opera di Chicago, dei teatri lirici San Francisco, San Diego e Vancouver, con le Orchestre di Philadelphia e Cleveland, le Orchestre sinfoniche di Montreal e Ottawa e il Festival di Cincinnati. In Europa è stato ospite frequente dell'Opera nazionale della Baviera di Monaco, dove ha interpretato, tra l'altro, i ruoli di Manrico e Gabriele Adorno (*Simon Boccanegra*), e ha fatto visita ai teatri lirici di Vienna, Berlino, Bonn, Colonia, Amburgo, Parigi, Nizza, Zurigo, Bruxelles, Oslo, Barcellona, Oviedo, Verona e Torino. Oltre ad essere un illustre interprete di serate concertistiche e programmi televisivi, Dennis O'Neill ha al suo attivo numerose registrazioni, tra cui *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Tosca*, *La bohème* e un album di brani solistici per Chandos in associazione con la Peter Moores Foundation. Nel 2000 ha ricevuto il CBE, un'onorificenza britannica.

Il tenore **Mark Le Brocq**, vincitore di diversi premi della Royal Academy of Music, studia

presso il National Opera Studio. Attualmente è solista presso l'English National Opera, dove ha interpretato i ruoli di Boggart (*The Fairy Queen*), Odoardo (*Ariodante*), Don Curzio (*Le nozze di Figaro*), Don Ottavio, Tamino, Monostato, Borsa, Cassio (*Otello*), Remendado (*Carmen*), Rodriguez (*Don Quichotte* di Massenet), Nathaniel (*Les Contes d'Hoffmann*), Tonik (*Le due vedove* di Smetana), Missail (*Boris Godunov*), Narraboth (*Salome*), Paris (*King Priam*), Primo Ufficiale (*Der Prinz von Homburg* di Henze) e Doctor Maxwell (*The Silver Tassie* di Turnage), tra l'altro. Si è esibito in concerti solistici e oratori ed ha partecipato a diversi festival in tutta Europa, in Medio Oriente e negli Usa, oltre a comparire in tutte le principali sale di Londra. Ha al suo attivo numerose registrazioni audio e video.

La carriera di cantante di Geoffrey Mitchell racchiude un repertorio notevole che spazia dalla musica antica a quella contemporanea e che l'ha portato in Scandinavia, Germania, nella ex Cecoslovacchia, in Canada e Australasia. L'esperienza di direzione degli inizi con la BBC lo ha condotto ad un maggiore coinvolgimento con i suoi stessi cantanti e inoltre alla creazione del **Geoffrey Mitchell Choir**. Le prime registrazioni sono sfociate nel

coinvolgimento a lungo termine del Coro con Opera Rara, per la quale ha inciso più di trenta registrazioni. Il Coro gode di una fama sempre maggiore con ulteriore lavoro dalla BBC e da case discografiche internazionali. Per la Chandos il Geoffrey Mitchell Choir ha partecipato a numerose registrazioni nelle applaudite serie di Opera in English con il patrocinio della Peter Moores Foundation.

Dal 1932, anno in cui venne fondata da Sir Thomas Beecham, la **London Philharmonic Orchestra** entusiasma il pubblico con le sue interpretazioni a cui hanno partecipato direttori e solisti di fama mondiale. L'elenco dei Direttori stabili comprende Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt e Franz Welser-Möst. L'ultimo della serie, Kurt Masur, entra in carica nel settembre del 2000. Dal 1992 la London Philharmonic Orchestra è residente alla Royal Festival Hall, mentre da 35 anni è l'orchestra sinfonica residente alla Glyndebourne Festival Opera. La versatilità e la reputazione di eccellenza artistica dell'orchestra sono legate anche al suo impegno pionieristico in programmi educativi e progetti per la comunità locale, alle numerose registrazioni

premiare e allo straordinario successo delle sue tournées.

**David Parry** ha studiato con Sergiu Celibidache ed ha cominciato la sua carriera come assistente di Sir John Pritchard. Ha debuttato all'English Music Theatre, quindi è diventato direttore d'orchestra presso la Städtische Bühnen Dortmund e la Opera North. È stato Direttore Musicale di Opera 80 dal 1983 al 1987 e dal 1992 è stato Direttore Musicale fondatore dell'Opera di Almeida.

Lavora copiosamente in opere e concerti, a livello nazionale ed internazionale. Ha diretto diverse produzioni presso la English National Opera e appare regolarmente con la Philharmonia Orchestra. Nel 1996 ha debuttato con *Così fan tutte* al Glyndebourne Festival, dove nel 1998 ha diretto la prima mondiale di *Flight* di Jonathan Dove.

È un frequente visitatore della Spagna dove si è esibito in concerto con la maggior parte delle maggiori orchestre spagnole. Ha diretto la prima spagnola di *Peter Grimes* a Madrid e nel 1996 la prima produzione spagnola di *The Rake's Progress*. È apparso in Germania, Svezia, Paesi Bassi, al Festival di Pesaro in Italia, al Festival Internazionale di Hong Kong, in Giappone con una tournée della *Carmen* e

in Messico con la UNAM Symphony Orchestra. Recenti nuove produzioni da lui dirette comprendono il *Fidelio* al Festival della Nuova Zelanda, *Maria Stuarda* al Teatro di Basilea e *Lucia di Lammermoor* alla New Israeli Opera.

Il suo lavoro in studio di registrazione comprende la produzione della BBC di *Der Vampyr* di Marschner nonché ventuno registrazioni operistiche complete con il patrocinio della Peter Moores Foundation. Tra questi vi sono numerosi dischi per l'etichetta Opera Rara che hanno vinti parecchi premi,

tra cui il belga Prix Cecilia per la *Rosmonda d'Inghilterra* di Donizetti. Per Chandos ha diretto sette registrazioni di arie d'opera (con Bruce Ford, Diana Montague, Dennis O'Neill, Alastair Miles, Yvonne Kenny, John Tomlinson e Della Jones, le ultime due usciranno nel 2000 e nel 2001), nonché *Faust*, *Don Pasquale*, *L'elisir d'amore*, *La bohème*, *Cavalleria rusticana*, *Pagliacci*, *Tosca* (vincitrice di un premio) e brani scelti da *Der Rosenkavalier*, tutte in collaborazione con la Peter Moores Foundation.



Richard H. Smith

Dennis O'Neill during the recording sessions



Richard H. Smith

Clive Bayley and Alan Opie during the recording sessions

COMPACT DISC ONE

**Part I. The Duel**

**Scene 1**

*A vestibule in the palace of Aliaferia; on one side a door, leading to the apartments of the Count di Luna. Ferrando and a number of the Count's Servants reclining near the doorway; some Soldiers walking to and fro at the back.*

**No. 1. Introductory Chorus and Aria**

**Ferrando** (*to the Servants, who are going to sleep*)

- [1] Wake up, there, wake up, there!  
Remember. The Count himself may find you sleeping; you know him too well. Sometimes he watches all through the night hours, beneath his Leonora's window!

**Chorus of Servants**

We have seen how this jealous passion has driv'n him to madness.

**Ferrando**

This Troubadour who sings at nightfall, here in the palace gardens, is the rival he fears and curses!

**Chorus**

Then in case we grow weary and close our eyes in sleep, will you not tell us the story of Garzia, our master's younger brother?

**Ferrando**

Very well, come gather close around.

**Soldiers** (*coming forward*)

Begin now.

**Servants**

Just listen, just listen!

**Cavatina: Narrative**

**Ferrando**

- [2] Heav'n had giv'n my old master two fine children who became all his pride and joy; they had a nurse who watched from night till morning by the side of the younger boy. One day, just as the stars above were fading, she felt danger was near; and she saw by the child as it lay sleeping...

**All the Chorus**

Who, come tell us, who stood there?

**Ferrando**

She saw a gipsy there, smould'ring with hatred, symbols of sorcery, circling her forehead, staring with evil eyes upon that infant, moaning and mumb'ling some foul enchantment. Trembling with terror, the old nurse screamed and shouted...

her calls for succour re-echoed in the distance; in less time than I take to tell you about it, her yelling brought all the sleepy guards to her assistance.

They gave no quarter to the old gipsy but chased her from the palace gates without delay.

**Chorus**

That evil woman was rightly punished and for that outrage they made her pay.

**Ferrando**

She declared she had come to tell the fortune of the infant Garzia!

(*speaking*)

The liar!

Day by day the boy grew weaker, torn and wasted by fever. His face was thin and pale, shivering and groaning, all the night he lay suff'ring, by day he shuddered and never stopped his moaning... She cast a spell upon him.

(*The Chorus are struck with horror.*)

We chased that gipsy, caught her and bound her, that night the fierce flames flared up around her.

Yet though the gipsy died, she left a daughter; she swore revenge for her mother's slaughter, driven by madness she took a dreadful vengeance!

One day soon after, Garzia vanished, then we discovered some embers still burning in that place where the old gipsy herself had perished.

Deep in the ashes, oh God! we uncovered the smould'ring skeleton of some poor child.

**Chorus**

That evil gipsy and her mad daughter, by earth and heaven are now reviled.

**Solo with Chorus**

**Chorus**

And the father?

**Ferrando**

In his grief, he died soon after; to the end, he was filled with strange forebodings, something told him the boy had not really perished, and as he lay there dying, he made our present master give him his word that he'd seek his brother all his days...

Ah! 'twas useless.

**Chorus of Soldiers**

What of the girl, was she never seen again?

**Ferrando**

No, she escaped us! If I could but find her, justice would be done!

**Chorus of Servants**

But are you sure you would know her?

**Ferrando**

Many years have gone by since these happenings... yet I'd know her.

**Chorus of Soldiers**

If we could catch her then we would send her down to hell to her mother.

**Ferrando**

To her mother?

(*with a dark voice*)

Men will tell you that the gipsy's evil spirit

lingers in this palace and hovers round us; when skies are dark and gloomy she comes to haunt us in strange disguises.

**Servants** (*with horror*)  
We know it!

**Soldiers** (*with terror*)  
We know it!

**Chorus of Soldiers**  
Up there on the rooftop men say they have seen her,  
she comes in the shape of a bat or hyena!

**Chorus of Servants**  
In form of a vampire, she's even more evil,  
at daybreak she flies away, back to the devil.

**Ferrando**  
A servant who struck her became the next victim.  
He dared once to strike at her and ill fortune hit him!  
He died! In his terror he died!

(*All are struck with superstitious terror.*)

**Chorus of Soldiers**  
Ah! He died! Ah!

**Ferrando**  
He died in his terror! She came in the shape of a vampire one evening.

**Chorus**  
A vampire!

**Ferrando**  
The house was deserted, no creature was stirring;  
she stared at him wildly and filled him with terror...

**Chorus**  
She stared at him!

**Ferrando**  
...and then she let out such a bloodthirsty yell!  
At that very moment midnight sounded...

(*A bell strikes twelve.*)

**Ferrando and Chorus**  
Ah! Curses on that gipsy, that demon, that demon from hell! Ah!

(*The Servants range themselves by the door, and the Soldiers retire to the back.*)

## Scene 2

*Gardens of the palace; on the right, a marble staircase. Dense clouds pass over the moon.*

## No. 2. Recitative and Aria

### Recitative

**Inez**  
[3] Come, wait no longer. It's long past midnight, hurry. The Queen has commanded your presence, you heard her.

**Leonora**  
Another night will pass and I shall not see him!

**Inez**  
There's danger in this passion, my lady. Oh, tell me, where did you first see this knight and come to love him?

**Leonora**  
At the tournament. I saw him dressed in a sombre coat of mail, his shield and helmet bore no crest or plumage, no one knew who he was, yet in the contest he vanquished all rivals. There on his brow I placed the crown of laurel. Civil war broke out soon after, we met no more. Fled like some golden vision seen in my slumbers! My life seemed empty, day followed day... and then...

**Inez**  
What happened?

**Leonora**  
I'll tell you.

### Cavatina

**Leonora**  
[4] The stars shone in the heav'ns above,  
as all the world lay sleeping;  
the moon high in her silver realm,  
her lonely watch was keeping...  
Then in that hour of peace and calm,  
sounds of a lute came stealing,  
borne on the scented midnight air,  
his secret heart revealing.  
I heard a plaintive song of love,  
the Troubadour was there.

In humble verses like murmured pray'rs  
he sang of his devotion; I listened and I heard a name  
repeated, it was my own! I ventured near my balcony...  
I saw him, saw him before me!  
I knew the joy that angels know,  
joy until then denied me!  
His glance, his ardent vows of love,  
made earth a heav'n for me.

**Inez**  
All that you tell me fills me with horror,  
you do not know him, be careful.

**Leonora**  
(I cannot.)

**Inez**  
This nameless stranger makes me suspicious. He seems to waken some dark foreboding. Try to forget him.

**Leonora**  
Forget him! No never!

**Inez**  
Let me advise you, I am your friend...  
Promise!

**Leonora**  
To forget him? You speak an unknown language that love does not understand.

**Cabaletta****Leonora**

- [5] No words can tell the measure  
of my sincere devotion,  
with this new found emotion  
my soul is all aflame.  
Our fates are joined for ever.  
I never will forsake him.  
If death should come to take him,  
to join him is my desire.

**Inez (aside)**

May heav'n above protect you in all that may  
transpire!

**Leonora**

No words can tell the measure *etc.*

**Inez**

I pray that she may never regret this mad desire.  
(*They ascend the staircase into the palace.*)

**No. 3. Recitative and Romance****Recitative****Count di Luna**

- [6] How still the night is. And now our most  
gracious Sov'reign must be safely sleeping... but  
there her lady watches! Oh Leonora, there by the  
window the glow of the burning candles,  
lighting up the darkness, tells me that you're not  
sleeping. Ah, how this fire within me fills my  
soul with yearning! I'll declare my passion, and

you shall listen... Courage! This is the hour for  
which I have waited!  
(*He is rushing up the staircase when the sound of a  
harp stays him.*)

- [7] The Troubadour! The madman!

**Romance****Manrico (the Troubadour)**

Though naught on earth is left me,  
since fate of joy bereft me,  
I hope for love once more  
to cheer the Troubadour.

**Count di Luna**

The madman! How dare he!

**Manrico**

If I possessed that treasure,  
precious beyond all measure,  
then blest for evermore  
would be the Troubadour!

**Count di Luna**

How dare he! I cannot bear it.  
She has heard him,... comes to meet him!

**Recitative and Trio**

(*The Count wraps himself in his cloak, and  
Leonora rushes towards him.*)

**Recitative****Leonora**

Oh, my beloved,...

**Count di Luna**

(What's this?)

**Leonora**

...you come so late tonight to join me; my heart  
has been impatient and counted ev'ry moment,  
but heav'n has guided you here once again to my  
embraces.

**Manrico (amongst the trees)**

Leonora!

(*The moon shines out and shows a knight with  
closed visor.*)

**Trio****Leonora**

- [8] Who's speaking?  
(*recognising them both, and throwing herself at the  
feet of Manrico*)  
Ah, all these shadows here blinded me and  
deceived me. Those words were meant for you  
alone and not for him, believe me! Although I  
was mistaken, my vow remains unbroken.  
To heav'n above I swear it, my heart is yours  
alone.

**Count di Luna (to Leonora)**

You're raving!

**Manrico (raising Leonora)**

Forgive, forgive me!

**Count di Luna**

For this he shall atone!

**Leonora**

I love you, I love you!

**Manrico**

I doubt no longer!

**Count di Luna**

If you're a knight, declare yourself.

**Leonora**

(Oh heav'n.)

**Count di Luna**

Come on, who are you!

**Leonora (softly to Manrico)**

For pity's sake!

**Manrico**

You know me well,  
(*raising his visor*)  
Manrico's my name.

**Count di Luna**

What, you here? What madness!  
You, a rebel, in league with outlaws! Condemned  
as a traitor, you dare to trespass here, within our  
royal palace?

**Manrico**

Come on then! Call out your guards this  
moment, sentence your rival to face the  
executioner tomorrow.

**Count di Luna**

Your hour of death is nearer far than you may  
think, you madman. Follow!



**Leonora**

Listen!

**Count di Luna** (*to Manrico*)

All my wrongs and injured pride demand that I should kill you.

**Leonora**

Ah, stay, I beg you!

**Count di Luna**

Follow me!

**Manrico**

Lead on!

**Leonora**

(What shall I do?)

**Count di Luna**

Follow me!

**Manrico**

Lead on!

**Leonora**

(If I should call for help they might arrest him.)  
Listen.

**Count di Luna**

No!

- [9] Jealous fury and slighted passion  
fan the flames of my love and longing.  
(*to Manrico*)  
All your lifeblood, you cursed villain,  
could not quench this fire within me!  
(*to Leonora*)

Foolish woman, you told him you loved him!

In your love you glorify.

Ev'ry word that you have spoken

has condemned this man to die.

**Leonora**

Stay a moment and hear my entreaty,

calm your anger, listen to reason:

I, yes, I alone am guilty.

Let me suffer for my treason!

Kill me, rejoice in your vengeance.

I will scorn you until I die.

I'll not falter or show repentance,

all your pow'r I now defy!

**Manrico**

All his boasting is vain and useless.

He shall pay, he'll not escape us;

for the stranger whose love inspires you,

by love's pow'r shall be victorious.

Hopes of triumph have gone for ever.

Your last moment on earth is nigh.

Fate has giv'n me this woman to treasure,

by my own hand, I swear, you shall die.

**Count di Luna**

Madness. Foolish woman... How could you love  
him...

All your lifeblood, you cursed villain, *etc.*

(*Exeunt Manrico and the Count, with drawn  
swords; Leonora falls senseless*)

*End of the First Part*

## Part II. The Gipsy

### Scene 1

*A ruined habitation on the border of the Biscayan  
mountains; within, through a wide opening, a fire  
is seen; day is dawning. Azucena is seated by the  
fire, Manrico is lying on a low couch at her side,  
wrapped in his mantle, his helmet at his feet, a  
sword in his hand, on which he is intently gazing.  
The Gipsy band is scattered about the stage.*

### No. 4. Chorus of Gipsies

#### Chorus

- [10] See how the shadowy clouds are flying,  
day is returning to light the heavens.  
Night like a widow grown weary of sighing,  
throws off the garments of pray'r and penance.  
(*They take up their tools.*)  
Let's start our labours!  
(*They strike their hammers in time on their anvils.*)  
Bring us... the hammers.  
Who cheers the days of the poor, roving gipsy?  
Who never, never fails him? Who cheers the  
gipsy? Who brings him pleasure? The zingarella!  
(*They rest awhile from their work, addressing the  
women.*)  
Bring round the wine-jug; for wine revives our  
strength and spirits, too, and brings new courage.  
(*The women pour them wine in rustic cups.*)  
See how the nectar that flows in our tankards,  
sparkles and shines like a miser's treasure.  
More work is waiting!

Who cheers the days of the poor, roving gipsy?  
*etc.*

### Canzone

(*While Azucena sings, the Gipsies gather round her.*)

### Azucena

- [11] Fierce flames are raging, see how the noisy crowd  
surges around her, eager for slaughter.  
Cries of derision echo round ev'ry side.  
Here comes the gipsy, led to the torture.  
Dark fires are shining in all those hateful eyes,  
while evil flames are rising to scorch the skies.  
Fierce flames are raging, there stands the sacrifice,  
clad in her black robe, barefoot and haggard.  
Screams of rejoicing greet her last agony,  
hear their resounding far down the valley.  
Dark fires are shining *etc.*

### Chorus of Gipsies

#### Chorus

You sing a tragic song!

### Azucena

Yet no more tragic than that awful deed of  
horror which has giv'n my song its story.  
(*turns towards Manrico and says in an undertone*)  
Avenge my death! Avenge my death!

### Manrico

(Again those mysterious words!)

### A Gipsy

It's time that we were starting our daily search

for food, come on, this pathway will lead us  
down the valley.

**Chorus**

You lead us.

We'll follow.

*(They carefully replace their tools in their bags and  
descend from the height, singing as they go.)*

Who cheers the days of the poor, roving gipsy?  
*etc.*

**No. 5. Recitative and Narrative**

**Recitative**

**Manrico** *(rising)*

We're alone here. Now tell me more about that  
sad story!

**Azucena**

So you've not heard it before?

But since your boyhood, wars and battles have  
always kept you far from your people. The tale  
concerns the death of my own mother. She was  
caught by a certain Count and accused of  
witchcraft. When his son lay dying, he said that  
she'd bewitched him. That cruel man condemn'd  
her to perish in torment.

**Manrico** *(starts away from the spot with dread)*  
Ill fated woman!

**Narrative**

**Azucena**

<sup>12</sup> They brought her, fettered and pow'rless,

to suffer her cruel sentence.  
My child safe on my shoulder,  
I followed at a distance.  
In vain I tried to approach her,  
the crowd proved too fierce and pressing,  
in vain she tried to break away  
and give me her blessing.  
Guards cursed her without pity,  
their blows rained down around her,  
they brought her to that fearful place,  
there to the stake they bound her.  
At last, in her dying anguish,  
'Avenge my death', she cried.  
Those words that will not leave me,  
remind me still, remind me how she died.

**Manrico**

Did you avenge her?

**Azucena**

I stole the child from his father's palace, and  
took him down there with me... I soon had the  
fire rekindled.

**Manrico**

The fire! Oh God,  
*(shrinking from her)*  
you mean it?

**Azucena**

That helpless infant was crying... Vengeance  
inspired me no longer... And my heart stirred  
with pity. That moment I saw my error,  
memories came to haunt me. I beheld those

phantoms rise up again before me! The  
soldiers... there stood my mother, still writhing  
in her torment... barefoot... and bleeding...  
that message, her dying message. I heard it.  
'Avenge my death.' My fingers convulsed with  
terror... snatched up that tiny child, I saw that  
inferno, there I threw him! When I regained my  
senses I felt new life returning, the raging fire  
still faced me, there was the victim burning! But  
when I looked around me, I saw the child I'd  
stolen still lying there beside me.

**Manrico**

There, beside you?

**Azucena**

It was my own child...

**Manrico**

Ah!

**Azucena**

...my child that I had murdered!

**Manrico**

Your own child!

**Azucena**

Ah!

**Manrico**

Heav'n above forgive your crime.

**Azucena**

My only, my only child that I had murdered!

**Manrico**

Oh God! Your own child!

**Azucena**

These bitter mem'ries that haunt me, still make  
my blood run cold.

*(Azucena falls exhausted on her seat, Manrico  
stands for some moments dumb with horror and  
astonishment.)*

**No. 6. Recitative and Duet**

**Recitative**

**Manrico**

If your child perished, who was my mother?  
Who am I?

**Azucena** *(interrupting him)*

You are my own son!

**Manrico**

And yet, this story...

**Azucena**

The story means nothing... When I recall that  
morning my mother perished, dark shadows  
cloud my mem'ry and my lips speak of foolish  
thoughts and fancies. Tell me, have I not always  
been a loving mother?

**Manrico**

None could deny it.

**Azucena**

And if you are still living, who saved you? At

midnight after your defeat before Pelilla, where they said you'd died in the struggle, did I not come to seek you for burial? When I found you there, and saw that you still breathed, were you not recalled to life through my devotion? For months I watch'd here beside you and healed the wounds from which you were bleeding!

**Manrico** (*with noble pride*)

Wounds I suffered in the battle, they brought me no dishonour, for when our troops were all defeated I alone faced the foe with none to help me! At last that vile Count of Luna's men had me surrounded, they triumphed, I fell, fell like a soldier.

**Azucena**

There's your reward for the mercy that you showed him the night you overpower'd him, then let him escape! What could have blinded you? Why did your courage fail you?

**Manrico**

Oh mother, I hardly know how to tell you!

**Azucena**

You spared his life! You spared his life!

**Duet**

**Manrico**

- [13] As we struggled he stumbled before me, shamed and humbled he lay at my mercy: in the starlight my sword flashed above me, poised to strike him dead that moment. Then some power,

then some unknown pow'r detained me, some mysterious voice restrained me, and I shuddered, my blood ran cold as ice, I heard a strange command as if an angel came from heaven, yes, an angel came from heav'n above and murmured, 'Stay your hand'.

**Azucena**

Yet no angel voice from heaven shows concern for your survival, and if fate again should lead you into combat with your rival, show him no mercy, never betray me, always remember you must obey me! Have no pity, plunge this weapon deep into the traitor's heart. Show him no mercy and have no remorse, strike and kill him, I command you.

**Manrico**

Yes, I swear it. I'll not spare him and my sword shall find his heart!

(*The prolonged note of a horn is heard.*)

That is our signal, it comes from Ruiz. I'll answer.

(*sounds his horn in answer*)

**Azucena** (*sits absorbed, unconscious of what passes*)

'Avenge my death.'

**Manrico** (*to a Messenger, who has entered*)

Tell me your news. How goes the battle, what is the outcome?

**A Messenger** (*giving a letter*)

This secret letter will tell you all.

**Manrico** (*reading*)

'Our men have captured Castellar; by order of the Prince you are charged with its defence and safety: when you receive this, come as quickly as you can. This very evening, Leonora, believing you to be dead, will take the veil in the neighbouring convent of the Holy Cross.'

(*despairingly*)

Ah, God in heaven!

**Azucena** (*rising*)

(What is it?)

**Manrico** (*to the Messenger*)

Go quickly down to the valley, see that a horse is ready for me.

**Messenger**

Yes!

**Azucena** (*interposing*)

Manrico!

**Manrico**

Don't lose a moment, hurry, and tell them to meet me below there.

(*The Messenger departs in haste.*)

**Azucena**

Manrico, you're leaving?

**Manrico**

If I stay I lose her... lose Leonora!

**Azucena**

(He must be mad!)

**Manrico** (*puts on his helmet and takes his mantle*)

Good-bye!

**Azucena**

No, stay here, listen...

**Manrico**

I cannot...

**Azucena**

Stay here.

(*with authority*)

Your mother speaks to you!

- [14] You are still too weak to venture on a lonely path full of danger! Those wounds of yours, you madman, once again may wrack you with fever. No, I cannot let you suffer, you, my life, my very being, ev'ry drop of blood you shed comes from this poor heart of mine. Ah!

**Manrico**

If I stay a moment longer, then I lose my love, my treasure! Neither earth nor heav'n has power to divert me from my purpose!

**Azucena**

You're mad!

**Manrico**

Do not keep me for I must leave you; if I stayed, my tears would grieve you!

You would see me die before you  
of a coward's broken heart.

**Azucena**

No, I cannot let you suffer.

**Manrico**

If I lose my love, my treasure,  
you would see me die before you  
of a coward's broken heart.

**Azucena**

No, I cannot let you leave me,  
you, my life, my very being,  
ev'ry drop of blood you shed  
comes from this poor heart of mine.  
Stay here beside me!

**Manrico**

No, no, do not keep me!

**Azucena**

Your mother calls you. Ah! Stay, I beg you, your  
own mother commands you to stay, oh stay, I  
pray. Oh, stay here by your mother.

**Manrico**

I cannot lose my love! Release me, farewell, oh  
mother, farewell now. Oh mother, farewell now.

*(Exit Manrico, Azucena trying in vain to detain him)*

## Scene 2

*The cloister of a convent. Trees at the back. Night.  
The Count, Ferrando and several Retainers enter  
furtively, wrapped in their cloaks.*

### No. 7. Recitative and Aria

#### Recitative

**Count di Luna**

[15] All is deserted, and no sound of praying disturbs  
the air of quiet... I'm here in time then.

**Ferrando**

This mad adventure still may prove too  
dang'rous.

**Count di Luna**

I know it, yet tortured by my passion, spurred  
on by injured pride, my heart knows no fear.  
With Manrico dead, there seem'd to be nothing  
remaining to thwart my wishes, but now a new  
and pow'rful barrier divides us... the convent.  
No, no! No one else shall claim Leonora! She is  
mine, I swear it.

**Aria**

**Count di Luna**

[16] In the stars that shine above me  
there's no rival to her heav'nly radiance;  
all her smiles, whose charms delight me,  
give me new courage, give me courage in her  
presence.

Ah, the love that I bear her,  
may it bid her fears all depart.  
May the brightness of her glances  
calm the tempest in my heart.  
*(A bell is heard.)*

You hear that! Oh heav'n!

**Ferrando**

That bell means they're coming to the chapel.

**Count di Luna**

Before she reaches the altar we must seize her!

**Ferrando**

Be careful!

**Count di Luna**

Silence, I tell you! Obey me! Hide yourselves and  
keep out of sight for now.

*(Ferrando and the Retainers go to the back.)*

In a moment she will be mine! Oh, how that  
thought inflames me.

*(He anxiously watches the door, from which  
Leonora is to enter.)*

**Ferrando and Chorus of Retainers**

[17] The hour has come, no more delay,  
we'll hide away, like shadows in the night.  
The hour has come, be silent all.  
My lord is here, be silent and obey!

**Cabaletta**

**Count di Luna**

My hour of joy approaches,

and how that thought elates me;  
the bliss that here awaits me,  
no mortal man has known,  
no mortal man ever yet has known.  
Though heav'n is now my rival,  
the cloister shall not claim her,  
not God himself shall gain her,  
for she is mine alone.

**Ferrando and Chorus of Retainers**

The hour has come, *etc.*

**Count di Luna**

My hour of joy approaches, *etc.*

**Ferrando and Chorus of Retainers**

The hour has come and we obey! *etc.*

**Count di Luna**

Not even God in heav'n above me  
can rob me now of all I prize, *etc.*  
Now away, go hide yourselves, go hide among  
the shadows and obey. Away!

### No. 8. Finale

**Chorus of Nuns**

[18] Here in this world of sorrow,  
daughter of Eve remember,  
death's solemn hour will show you  
all earthly joys are vain,  
life is an empty shadow,  
nothing but dreams remain.

**Count di Luna**

Not God in heav'n can rob me now  
for she is mine and mine alone!

**Ferrando and Retainers of the Count** (*hidden  
behind the trees*)

No more delay! My lord commands and we obey!

**Chorus of Nuns**

Come, leave the world for ever,  
put on the veil we offer,  
here you will find seclusion,  
here you will find release,  
come, turn your eyes to heaven,  
heaven will give you peace.

**Count di Luna**

Not God in heav'n etc.

**Ferrando and Retainers of the Count**

No more delay! etc.

(*Enter Leonora with Inez*)

**Recitative**

**Leonora**

Why are you weeping?

**Inez**

Leonora, you now leave us for ever.

**Leonora**

Dearest companions, no comfort, no earthly  
pleasure, no hope is left me since he is dead. I  
pledge my life to the Lord, for He alone can

comfort my sorrow, then after pray'rs and  
humble repentance I may implore Him one day  
to reunite me with my loved one on high. So  
weep no longer, lead the way to the altar.

(*turning to go*)

**Count di Luna** (*suddenly interrupting her*)

No, ah no!

**Inez and Chorus of Nuns**

The Count!

**Leonora**

Gracious heav'n!

**Count di Luna**

My own bride you shall stand before the altar.

**Inez and Chorus of Nuns**

What impious language!

**Leonora**

Aren't you ashamed you dared come here?

**Count di Luna**

I come to claim you.

(*The Troubadour appears.*)

**All except the Count**

Ah!

**Concertato**

**Leonora**

<sup>[19]</sup> Oh, can it be, can I believe I see you here beside  
me!

Is this a dream, a fantasy, a magic spell that  
binds me!

My heart can scarcely bear this joy that here to  
me is given!

Have you come down from Paradise, am I in  
heav'n beside you?

Have you come down from Paradise, am I there  
beside you?

**Count di Luna**

So, now the dead return again from hell's  
infernal regions!

**Manrico**

Neither from heav'n nor hell do I come to spoil  
your pleasure.

**Count di Luna**

Or can it be that Satan rejects you from his  
legions.

**Manrico**

Your hired assassins thought that they had killed  
me at Pelilla!

**Count di Luna**

If you still live and life be dear to you, then you  
must forget this woman and never cross my path  
again.

**Manrico**

Fiercer and fiercer grew the fight; though you  
had me surrounded, the traitors were  
confounded, for heaven sent me aid.

**Leonora**

Am I in heav'n there by your side?

My heart dare not believe this joy, is this a  
dream, a dream of love, am I in heaven, have  
you come down from heaven above, or else I am  
there by your side?

**Inez** (*to Leonora*)

Now gracious heav'n, in whom you trusted,  
sends you aid in this sad hour. Our Lord has  
heard your pray'r.

**Manrico**

The foe was still confounded, for heav'n sent me  
aid.

**Count di Luna**

If you still live and life is dear, then never cross  
my path again, forget this woman.

**Ferrando** (*to the Count*)

You have defied your fortune, but all in vain, her  
defender is at hand.

**Chorus of Nuns** (*to Leonora*)

Now gracious heav'n in whom you trusted sends  
you aid in this sad hour. Our Lord has heard  
your pray'r.

**Chorus of Retainers of the Count**

You have defied, yes, defied your fortune and the  
might of heav'n above, but all in vain for her  
defender is at hand.

**Ruiz and the Followers of the Troubadour**  
Long live freedom!

**Manrico**  
My friends, you are welcome!

**Ruiz**  
Follow!

**Manrico** (*to Leonora*)  
Come, Leonora.

**Count di Luna** (*opposing him*)  
Would you cheat me...

**Leonora**  
Ah!

**Manrico**  
Stand back there...

**Count di Luna** (*draws his sword*)  
...of my own rightful prize! No!

**Ruiz and the Followers of the Troubadour**  
He's raving!

**Ferrando and the Retainers of the Count**  
Be careful, my lord!

(*Ruiz and the Troubadour's Followers surround and disarm the Count.*)

**Count di Luna** (*with furious gestures*)  
Jealous rage drives me mad with desire!

**Leonora**  
How he scares me... terrifies me... ah, terrifies me.

**Count di Luna**  
And the torments of hell...

**Inez and the Chorus of Nuns**  
Ah! Yes! Our Lord himself has heard your pray'r.

**Manrico**  
May you suffer, yes, may you suffer in grief and despair.

**Ruiz and the Followers of the Troubadour** (*to Manrico*)  
Follow! Follow, for you will be safe in our care.

**Count di Luna**  
And the torments of hell, will for ever be mine.

**Ferrando and the Retainers of the Count** (*to the Count*)  
Leave her! Leave her, for brave men must sometimes forbear.

**Leonora**  
Have you come down from Paradise, am I there beside you?  
Have you come down from heaven, am I there by your side?

**Inez and the Chorus of Nuns**  
Our Lord has heard your pray'r.

**Manrico**  
Follow, oh my beloved.

**Ruiz and the Followers of the Troubadour**  
Follow, we will watch o'er you!

**Count di Luna**  
...will be for ever mine.

**Ferrando and the Retainers of the Count**  
Leave her, stay here no longer.

*End of the Second Part*

COMPACT DISC TWO

### Part III. The Gipsy's Son

#### Scene 1

*The camp. At the right the Count's tent, with a banner floating at the top, in token of command. In the distance the towers of Castellar.*

#### No. 9. Chorus of Soldiers

##### A Party of Soldiers

- [1] Though today we take our leisure,  
dawn will bring a sterner pleasure.

##### Another Party of Soldiers (*brightening their armour*)

Swords that now are bright and shining,  
will have tasted blood by morning.  
(*A strong band of armed men cross the back of the stage.*)

Our reserves have come to join us.  
They have come from near and far!

**All the Soldiers**  
Soon we'll start the battle raging  
round the walls of Castellar.

##### Ferrando

These are your orders; our noble captain  
commands that at break of day we make an  
assault on the fortress. When Castellar is taken  
rich plunder shall be yours, beyond believing. At  
daybreak tomorrow!

##### Soldiers

We will fight and conquer!

##### Ferrando and Soldiers

Let all the trumpets set echos replying  
when they summon us to battle and to plunder.  
High on the walls let our banners be flying  
while our guns rage and roar like the thunder.  
Never before has our triumph seemed brighter,  
nor our hopes of success so assured:  
Booty and treasure now wait for us yonder,  
fame and glory shall be our reward.  
Honour and glory shall be our just reward.  
Let all the trumpets *etc.*  
Fortune smiles on us all.  
We shall obey duty's call,  
fame and glory our reward *etc.*

#### No. 10. Recitative and Trio

##### Recitative

##### Count di Luna

- [2] She's in my rival's arms! That thought torments

me, it pursues me like some demon, I cannot escape it. 'She's in my rival's arms.' Tomorrow, at the first sign of daylight, they part and part for ever. Oh Leonora.

*(Enter Ferrando. A confused noise is heard.)*

What news?

**Ferrando**

A gipsy woman has been seen around the camp today. As soon as she knew we were suspicious she tried to evade us. The soldiers thought the gipsy was a spy sent by the traitors... they gave chase.

**Count di Luna**

Then what happen'd?

**Ferrando**

They caught her.

**Count di Luna**

And have you seen her?

**Ferrando**

No, but the leader of her escort gave me that message.

*(The noise draws near.)*

Here she comes.

**Chorus of Guards**

Come on, you gipsy, come on there... come on there.

Come on there!

**Azucena** *(her hands bound, is dragged on by Guards)*

Have mercy! Let me go now, ah, let me go now! What harm have I done?

**Count di Luna**

Come nearer...

*(Azucena is led before the Count.)*

Answer my questions, and do not tell me lies.

**Azucena**

Ask then?

**Count di Luna**

Where were you going?

**Azucena**

Who knows?

**Count di Luna**

Answer!

**Azucena**

Ev'ry gipsy is accustomed to wander where she pleases, in every land a stranger, her roof the sky above, the whole world her country.

**Count di Luna**

Where're you from?

**Azucena**

From Biscaya; deep in the wild, barren mountains of that region I found a refuge.

**Count di Luna**

*(From Biscaya!)*

**Ferrando**

*(Biscaya! Could we have found her?)*

**Trio**

**Azucena**

<sup>3</sup> Though my life was poor and lowly, I was happy and contented but alas my son has left me all alone and unprotected.

On I go, sad and forsaken, searching paths he may have taken, ev'ry day I hope to find him, all my grief he cannot know. Fonder love than I still bear him, no mother's heart on earth could show.

**Ferrando**

*(There's a likeness!)*

**Count di Luna**

So you've lived for many years there in Biscaya?

**Azucena**

Many, yes!

**Count di Luna**

Would you remember many years ago a child of noble fam'ly was abducted from his palace, and was taken to those same mountains?

**Azucena**

Who are you, tell me... who?

**Count di Luna**

The brother of that infant.

**Azucena**

*(Ah!)*

**Ferrando** *(noticing Azucena's terror)*

*(Yes!)*

**Count di Luna**

So you can tell me nothing?

**Azucena**

Nothing... No! Allow me to continue on my journey.

**Ferrando**

Keep her prisoner!

**Azucena**

*(Oh God!)*

**Ferrando**

For here at last we've caught the wretch who did that cruel murder.

**Count di Luna**

You're certain!

**Ferrando**

I'm certain!

**Azucena** *(aside to Ferrando)*

Silence!

**Ferrando** *(aloud)*

There stands the fiend who killed your brother!

**Count di Luna**

Ah! Murderess!

**Chorus**

Seize that gipsy!

**Azucena**

He is lying.

**Count di Luna**

But this time you shall not escape us.

**Azucena**

Ah!

**Count di Luna**

Now bind her arms securely!

*(The Guards obey.)*

**Azucena**

Have pity, have pity!

**Chorus**

Howl, you witch!

**Azucena**

My son, where are you? Oh Manrico, come and help me, come and save me, save your most unhappy mother!

**Count di Luna**

You're the mother of Manrico!

**Ferrando**

Kill her!

**Count di Luna**

A pris'ner in my pow'r!

**Ferrando**

Kill her! Kill her!

**Count di Luna**

What triumph!

**Cabaletta**

**Azucena**

[4] Ah! Release me from these cruel bonds, have mercy, I implore you, have pity on my torment or I shall die before you!  
You hateful son, more evil than your hated father.  
Tremble! For God will spare the poor.  
Tremble! His vengeance will fall upon you all.

**Count di Luna**

The treacherous Manrico is your son, you crazy gipsy, and so with ev'ry pang you suffer...

**Ferrando and Chorus**

You murd'rous witch, your time has come, for you a pyre will soon be burning.

**Count di Luna**

...I will wound him to the heart!  
Your capture proves a blessing, bringing joy past all expressing, for by my dear brother's death I swear, I'll have my vengeance at last.

**Ferrando and Chorus**

And after that there's hellfire, from whence there's no returning!

**Azucena**

Release me from these cruel bonds, etc.

**Count di Luna**

The mother of Manrico!

**Ferrando**

For you the fires are burning...

**Chorus**

For you the fires are burning, from hell there's no returning.

**Count di Luna**

That treacherous seducer...

**Ferrando, then Chorus**

...and you cannot escape them!

**Count di Luna**

...for by my brother's death I swear...

**Ferrando**

In never ending agony...

**Chorus**

In never ending agony your soul shall burn for evermore.

**Count di Luna**

...I'll have revenge at last.

*(At a sign from the Count, Azucena is led off by the Guards, while he enters his tent, followed by Ferrando.)*

**Scene 2**

*A hall in Castellar, a window at the back.*

**No. 11. Recitative and Aria**

**Recitative**

**Leonora**

[5] But what mean all these sounds of war around us?

**Manrico**

We are in danger, I can no longer keep it secret! For at the break of day Luna's men will attack us.

**Leonora**

Alas, how dreadful!

**Manrico**

Have no fear, for tomorrow we shall triumph. Though our foe be brave and strong, we shall be stronger.  
*(to Ruiz)*

Go now, prepare for battle. You yourself give the orders, until I join you. See all is ready.

*(Exit Ruiz)*

**Leonora**

What unhappy shadows have come to cloud our marriage.

**Manrico**

Come, forget all these horrors, dear Leonora!

**Leonora**

How can I?



**Manrico**

Our love and our devotion in time of danger will sustain and inspire us.

**Aria**

**Manrico**

- [6] When holy church has blessed our love,  
our hearts will grieve no longer,  
a sterner faith will fire my soul,  
my arm will fight the stronger.  
But if within in the book of fate  
my name has been recorded  
as one of those who fall today,  
alone and unrewarded,  
then in that hour when death is near,  
my thoughts to you will quickly fly.  
Take heart, my love, and have no fear,  
we meet again on high.

*(organ in a chapel close at hand)*

**Leonora**

The sound of solemn harmony...

**Manrico**

The sound of solemn harmony...

**Leonora**

...tells all the joy of faithful love!

**Manrico**

...the joy of faithful love!

**Leonora and Manrico**

Here we shall gain the grace and blessing of  
heav'n above!

*(Ruiz enters in haste.)*

**Ruiz**

Manrico!

**Manrico**

Yes!

**Ruiz**

That gipsy, hurry, she's now their pris'ner.

**Manrico**

Oh heaven!

**Ruiz**

And Count di Luna's men have made a fire to  
burn her.

**Manrico**

My strength has gone from ev'ry limb...  
*(approaching the window)*  
...darkness is closing round me.

**Leonora**

You're trembling!

**Manrico**

Leonora!...Learn the truth... I am...

**Leonora**

Well, who?

**Manrico**

...her son!

**Leonora**

Ah!

**Manrico**

The villains! The thought of such a deed drives  
me nearly mad with fury! Go out there, Ruiz,  
and call our men to arms. Go! Go! Hurry!  
Hurry!

*(Exit Ruiz in haste)*

**Cabaletta**

**Manrico**

- [7] That fierce inferno, her cruel sentence,  
fire me with fever, set me aflame!  
Ruffians repent this deed, or I'll have vengeance,  
your blood shall wipe out insult and shame!  
*(to Leonora)*  
She loved me dearly, I'll not desert her;  
all your entreaties I must deny.  
Ill fated mother, snared by that traitor,  
I come to save you, save you or die.

**Leonora**

You cannot know how this has hurt me, if you  
forsake me then I shall die!

*(Exit with Inez)*

**Manrico**

That fierce inferno, etc.

*(Ruiz returns with Soldiers.)*

**Ruiz with Soldiers**

To battle! To battle! May heaven guard us all.

**Manrico**

Ill fated mother!

I come to save you, to save you or die.

**Ruiz with Soldiers**

We all are ready to fight beside you, to save her  
or die.

**Manrico**

To battle, to battle, to battle!

**Ruiz with Soldiers**

To battle, to battle!

Away to victory and triumph!

*(Exit Manrico in haste, followed by Ruiz and the  
Soldiers, amid a din of arms, the trumpet calling to  
battle)*

*End of the Third Part*

**Part IV. The Torture**

**Scene 1**

*A wing of the palace of Aliaferia; on one side a  
tower with casements, secured by iron bars. Dark  
night.*

**No. 12. Recitative and Aria**

*(Enter Leonora and Ruiz enveloped in cloaks)*

**Recitative**

**Ruiz** *(in a whisper)*

- [8] We're there now; this is the fortress, here all the  
captured rebels await their sentence. Ah, he is  
imprisoned there in that tower.

**Leonora**

Go now, leave me here. Have no fear for me, I beg you, perhaps I still can save him.

*(Ruiz retires.)*

Why fear for me? The poison here in this ring protects me.

*(fixing her eyes upon a ring that she wears on her right hand)*

The night's dark shadows hide me, you do not know that I am watching, that I am near you. You gentle breezes that sigh around me, in pity tell him of all my love and my longing.

**Aria**

**Leonora**

- [9] Breeze of night, go seek him,  
echo my tears and sighing,  
pray, tell the captive Troubadour  
my love shall be undying.  
Send hope and consolation  
to cheer his desolation.  
Recall our treasured mem'ries,  
our dreams of love,  
but, here tonight, he must never know  
the pain in my heart.

*(The death bell sounds.)*

**Chorus**

- [10] Lord, have mercy upon a soul departing  
for that abode from which there's no returning;  
Lord, have mercy and with Thy love sustain him,  
grant that the fires of hell may never claim him.

**Leonora**

That sound and those voices,  
that hymn for the dying  
re-echoes around these walls  
and chills me with fear!  
It stifles my breathing,  
my courage is failing,  
I know that his last hour  
on earth now is near.

**Manrico** *(from the tower)*

Ah!  
When will death console me,  
when will he set me free?  
Life holds no pleasure for me!  
Farewell my love, my Leonora, farewell.

**Leonora**

Oh heav'n! How can I bear it?

**Chorus**

Lord, have mercy upon a soul departing *etc.*

**Leonora**

Now death is approaching  
that horrible tower,  
the sound of his beating wings  
is over my head,  
and for my beloved  
the gates of the prison  
will never be opened  
until he is dead.

**Chorus**

Miserere! Miserere!

**Manrico**

Faithful to vows we plighted  
I meet my death today,  
never forget me, pray,  
farewell my love, my Leonora, farewell!

**Leonora**

Can I forget you? Can I forget you?

**Manrico**

Faithful to vows we plighted,  
I meet my death today.  
Never forget me.

**Chorus**

Miserere! Miserere!

**Leonora**

Oh God, have mercy. Can I forget you?  
My love, my love, how can I forget?

**Cabaletta**

**Leonora**

- [11] You will see that my devotion  
here on earth has known no equal.  
Fate has yielded to its power.  
Death itself shall not prevail.  
I myself will buy your freedom  
at the price of my poor life;  
should we not be reunited  
then the grave shall end the strife.  
If nevermore united,  
the grave itself shall end the strife!

**No. 13. Recitative and Duet**

*A door opens from which enters the Count, followed by attendants; Leonora stands aside.*

**Recitative**

**Count di Luna** *(to his attendants)*

- [12] Now hear me! Bring the man down at dawn and behead him, then to the flames with his mother!  
*(The attendants enter the tower.)*  
It may be true that I abuse the power the King conferred upon me, but love for this woman drives me to all this madness. And now I've lost her! We captured Castellar, but she herself has escaped us. Our search was useless, none of our spies has seen her. Ah, could I only find her.

**Leonora** *(coming forward)*

Seek her no longer!

**Count di Luna**

Can this be... really... Leonora?

**Leonora**

No other!

**Count di Luna**

Why have you come here?

**Leonora**

When he is doomed to die tomorrow, how can you ask me?

**Count di Luna**

You dare defy me?

**Leonora**

Yes, I implore you to spare Manrico!

**Count di Luna**

You are raving! You are raving!

**Leonora**

Oh, spare his life!

**Count di Luna**

Ah! How could I spare my rival's life?

**Leonora**

May heaven move your heart to pity...

**Count di Luna**

Not even heav'n can move me, my God is one of vengeance.

**Leonora**

Have pity, have pity and hear me, I pray!

**Count di Luna**

Go! Go! Go!

**Duet**

**Leonora** (*throws herself in despair at his feet*)

<sup>[13]</sup> See all these bitter tears of mine,  
see all the grief I suffer,  
if this should fail to move your heart,  
then take the sacrifice I offer...  
Kill me, kill me, and take the sacrifice I offer...  
Let all your vengeance fall on me,  
but spare the Troubadour!

**Count di Luna**

Ah! Could he die a thousand deaths,  
I'd never be contented,  
by all the pangs of hell itself  
I'd still have him tormented.

**Leonora**

Kill me then!

**Count di Luna**

You love him and so my jealousy  
now burns fiercer than before,  
you love him and your devotion  
condemns him for evermore.

**Leonora**

Let all your vengeance fall on me, *etc.*

**Count di Luna**

All your entreaties cannot save the Troubadour!

**Leonora**

Have pity and spare him, *etc.*  
(*The Count is going, but Leonora clings to him.*)  
Listen!

**Count di Luna**

It's useless...

**Leonora**

Pity!

**Count di Luna**

No price on earth can buy your lover's freedom!  
Leave me now!

**Leonora**

One price there is, one only, and that I offer.

**Count di Luna**

What's the price you offer? Speak!

**Leonora** (*extends her hand to him, with grief*)

Myself!

**Count di Luna**

What? Do you mean it?

**Leonora**

I vow that I will keep my solemn promise.

**Count di Luna**

Can I be dreaming?

**Leonora**

Now let me climb the stairway to the tower, to  
tell him that he's free and release him. Then I'm  
yours!

**Count di Luna**

You swear it?

**Leonora**

To God I swear it, He knows all my innermost  
secrets.

(*A guard appears, to whom the Count whispers.*)

**Count di Luna**

You there!

(*Leonora takes poison from the ring.*)

**Leonora**

(A cold and lifeless body will await you.)

**Count di Luna** (*turning back to Leonora*)

<sup>[14]</sup> The man shall live.

**Cabaletta**

**Leonora** (*aside, with joy*)

(He lives! I cannot speak for joy,  
I thank you, heav'nly Father,  
with wildly beating heart  
I tell you of my fervour!  
I wait for death without alarm.  
Joy has replaced my sorrow.  
I'll say as I am dying  
that I have set him free!)

**Count di Luna**

What does this mean? Come tell me now,  
repeat your solemn promise,  
tell me I've not been dreaming,  
dreaming of folly and madness!

**Leonora**

(He lives!)

**Count di Luna**

You're mine, you're mine, repeat those words  
that all my doubts may vanish.  
I cannot yet believe it,  
can what you say be true?

**Leonora**

(He lives! I cannot speak for joy,  
I thank you, heav'nly Father!

I'll say as I am dying  
that I have set him free!  
With my last breath, I'll tell my love  
that I have set him free!)  
Let's go! Let's go, and I'll keep my sacred vow.

**Count di Luna**

Oh, say again your solemn promise,  
ah, and tell me that you are mine for ever!  
Remember, you have sworn!

*(They enter the tower.)*

**Scene 2**

*A gloomy dungeon, with a barred window; a door  
at the back, a dimly burning lamp hangs from the  
ceiling. Azucena reposes on a rough pallet, Manrico  
seated near her.*

**No. 14. Finale IV**

**Duet**

**Manrico**

<sup>15</sup> Mother, not sleeping?

**Azucena**

Slumber still evades me, this dreadful night I  
have passed in watching... praying.

**Manrico**

You are chilled by the dampness and the cold  
around us?

**Azucena**

No, but in this tomb of the living I feel my  
breath is stifled, and I long to escape and gain  
my freedom.

**Manrico** *(wringing his hands)*

Escape!

**Azucena** *(rising)*

Do not lose courage. My cruel tormentors have  
no power to harm me.

**Manrico**

And why not?

**Azucena**

See here... see upon my forehead the hand of  
death has mark'd me, my life is nearly ended.

**Manrico**

Ah!

**Azucena** *(speaking)*

They'll find nothing... but a rotting corpse...  
silent,  
*(with fierce exultation)*  
motionless, almost a skeleton!

**Manrico**

Stop now!

**Azucena**

You hear them? They are coming, they will take  
me away... there in the fire they'll burn me! My  
son, protect your mother!

**Manrico**

There's no one, do not be frightend...

**Azucena**

They'll burn me...

**Manrico**

There's no one, I assure you.

**Azucena**

They'll burn me! They'll burn me!  
Inhuman torture!

**Manrico**

Oh mother, oh mother!

**Azucena**

One morning, bloodthirsty murderers dragged  
my mother from prison to burn her! Look at all  
those flames around her! She is already on fire!  
Her hair is burning, the sparks fly up above  
her... her eyes are full of terror, and they start  
from their sockets! Ah, this nightmare torments  
me.

*(falls overwhelmed into the arms of Manrico)*

**Manrico**

If your own son can still bring you comfort, if  
you are still the mother who loved me, then  
forget all those horrors, come rest awhile and in  
slumber find peace and comfort.

*(conducts her to the couch)*

**Azucena**

<sup>16</sup> Yes, let me sleep for my limbs are weary...  
then all these fears will no more come near me,  
but if that fire once more be lighted,  
and you should see it, rouse me, I pray.

**Manrico**

Come, close your eyes, and then in your  
slumber, visions and fears will vanish away.

**Azucena** *(between sleeping and waking)*

There in our mountains, deep in Biscaya,  
new peace and solace we shall discover...  
and you will sing me songs of your childhood,  
there I shall sleep again far from all care.

**Manrico**

Rest now, dear mother, calm all your terrors,  
I know that heav'n will answer your pray'r.

**Azucena**

There you will sing me the songs of your  
childhood.  
There I shall slumber, far from all care.  
*(by degrees falls asleep)*  
There I will sleep far from all care.

**Manrico**

The power of heav'n will answer your pray'r.  
I know that heav'n will answer your pray'r.  
Come, rest now, dear mother,  
I know that heav'n will hear your pray'r!

*(Manrico remains kneeling beside her.)*

**Recitative and Trio**

*(The door opens, enter Leonora)*

**Recitative**

**Manrico**

Ah! A light is glimmering in the darkness.

**Leonora**

'Tis I, Manrico! My Manrico!

**Manrico**

My Leonora!

Ah, can it be that heaven in mercy sends me this blessing, here before I die?

**Leonora**

You will not die, I've come to save you.

**Manrico**

Save me? Leonora, how can you?

**Leonora**

No questions, don't lose a moment, good-bye now, hurry!

*(beckons to the door)*

**Manrico**

You will come with me?

**Leonora**

No, I must stay here!

**Manrico**

But why?

**Leonora**

Go! Leave me!

**Manrico**

No!

**Leonora** *(rushing to the door)*

Go, I tell you!

**Manrico**

No!

**Leonora**

Save your life!

**Manrico**

My life is worthless.

**Leonora**

Leave me, leave me!

**Manrico**

No!

**Leonora**

Go, I beg you!

**Manrico**

My life is worthless. But... look this way and let me see you... Who grants my freedom? What has it cost you?

**Trio**

**Manrico**

<sup>17</sup> You will not say? I need no answer... It was my rival! I see it. I see it.  
So you have sold yourself to that tyrant...

**Leonora**

Do not reproach me!

**Manrico**

Sold him the love that you promised was mine.

**Leonora**

Your anger blinds you and makes you heartless, yet far more cruel is your harsh injustice.

**Manrico**

You trait'ress!

**Leonora**

Stay here no longer, not even heaven can now defend you! Go while there's time!

**Manrico**

So you have sold yourself to my rival.

**Leonora**

If you stay here, not even heav'n can save you now, go while there's time.

**Manrico**

You sold the love you vowed was mine.

**Azucena**

Ah! Safe in our mountains, *etc.*

**Leonora**

Oh, leave me, leave me, not even heaven *etc.*

**Manrico**

No! You have surrendered unto my rival!

**Leonora**

If you delay, your life is forfeit, not even heav'n *etc.*

**Finale IV**

*(Leonora has fallen at the feet of Manrico.)*

**Manrico**

<sup>18</sup> Now leave me!

**Leonora**

Oh, despise me not... see how I'm suff'ring... my strength is failing.

**Manrico**

Go, I curse the day I ever met you.

**Leonora**

Manrico, listen! Ah, do not curse, for you should pray for me, yes, pray that heaven grant me pardon!

**Manrico**

That heav'n grant you pardon? What's this you tell me?

**Leonora** *(falls on her face)*

Manrico!

**Manrico** *(flies to raise her)*

Dear one, speak to me... tell me...

**Leonora**

Death has come to take me!

**Manrico**

You're dying!

**Leonora**

Ah! For this ring here contained a swifter poison than I imagined!

**Manrico**

Can this be true?

**Leonora**

Hold me, my hands are frozen...

*(touching her breast)*

but here within me a fire is burning!

**Manrico**

Why have you done this?

**Leonora**

Rather than live to be his bride, faithful to you I die!

**Manrico**

What madness that I have dared to curse this angel from above.

*(The Count enters and stands on the threshold.)*

**Leonora**

My strength is failing...

**Manrico**

I doubted you!

**Leonora**

My life is over. I'm dying, Manrico!

*(seizes his hand in sign of farewell)*

**Manrico**

God!

**Count di Luna**

Ah!

**Leonora**

Oh heav'nly Father, pardon a humble sinner.

**Count di Luna** *(aside)*

This woman has deluded me and dies to save his life.

**Leonora**

Rather than live to be his bride, faithful to you I die!

**Manrico**

What madness that I have dared to curse this angel from above.

**Count di Luna**

This woman has deluded me and dies to save his life.

**Leonora** *(in agony)*

Rather than live to be his bride, I die for you, my love!

Manrico!

**Manrico**

Leonora!

**Leonora**

Manrico, I love you!

**Manrico**

Ah!

**Count di Luna**

Ah!

*(signing to the guards to lead away Azucena)*

*(to guards)*

Behead the traitor!

**Manrico** *(led off by the guards)*

Mother, farewell for ever!

**Azucena** *(scarcely awake)*

Manrico! My son, where are you?

**Count di Luna**

So dies the traitor!

**Azucena**

Have mercy! Listen...

*(The Count draws Azucena to the window.)*

**Count di Luna**

Look there!

**Azucena**

Heavens!

**Count di Luna**

He's perished!

**Azucena**

Manrico was your brother!

**Count di Luna**

Ah! God in heaven!

**Azucena**

You are avenged, oh mother!

*(falls senseless by the window)*

**Count di Luna**

And I still live!

*End of the Fourth Part*

Translated by Tom Hammond,  
reproduced by permission of  
English National Opera Benevolent Fund



Richard H. Smith

Clive Bayley, Alan Opie, Dennis O'Neill, Sharon Sweet, Helen Williams and Mark Le Brocq with the Geoffrey Mitchell Choir and London Philharmonic Orchestra during the recording sessions



Richard H. Smith

David Parry and the London Philharmonic Orchestra during the recording sessions

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3000(2)



CHAN 3008(2)



CHAN 3014(3)

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3004



CHAN 3003



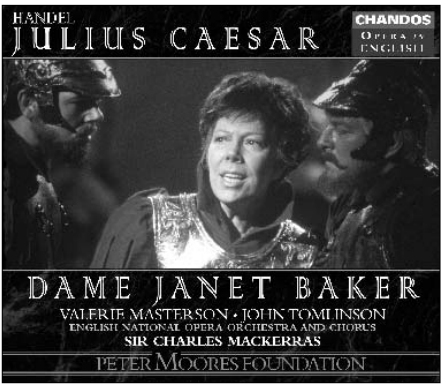
CHAN 3029



Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3017(2)



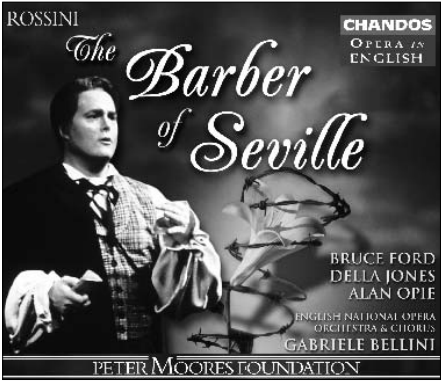
CHAN 3019(3)



CHAN 3023(2)



CHAN 3011(2)



CHAN 3025(2)

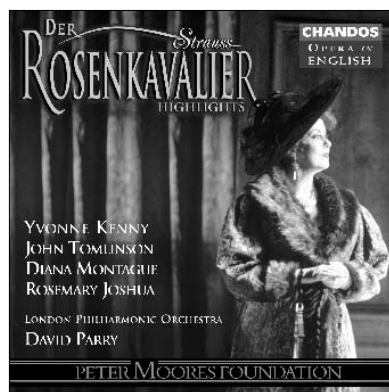


CHAN 3027(2)

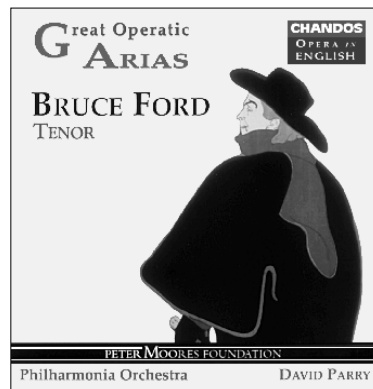
## Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3007

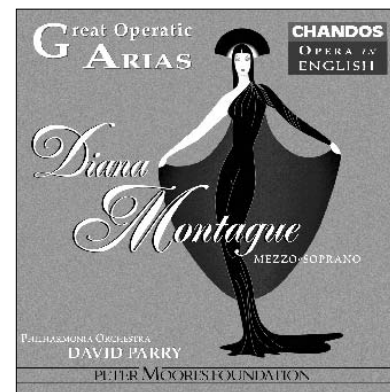


CHAN 3022

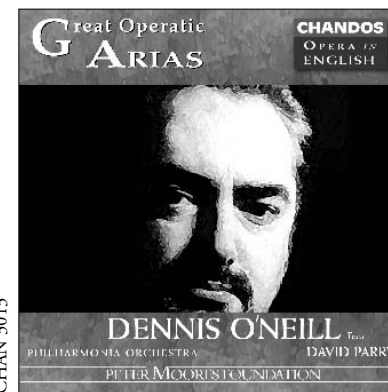


CHAN 3006

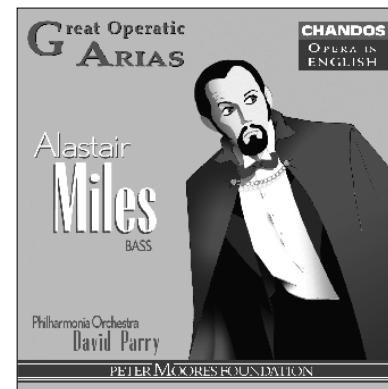
## Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3010



CHAN 3013



CHAN 3032

Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3005(2)

CHAN 3030(2)



Opera in English on Chandos

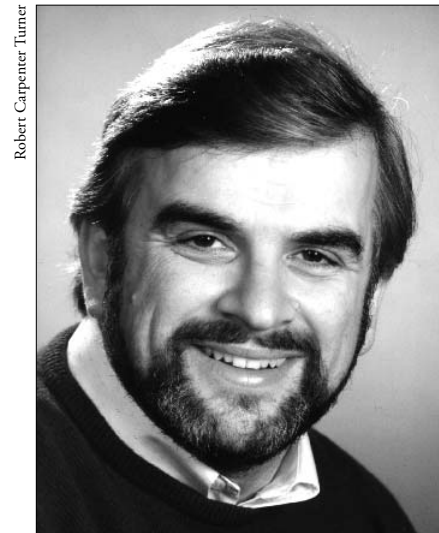


CHAN 3033(2)

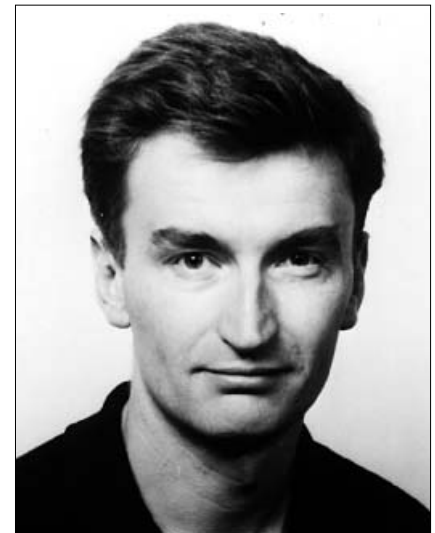
Opera in English on Chandos



CHAN 3035



Alan Opie



Clive Bayley



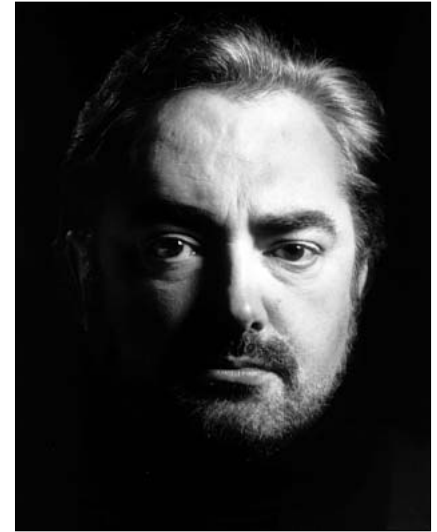
Sharon Sweet



Helen Williams



Anne Mason



Dennis O'Neill

Clive Bada



Mark Le Brocq

#### **Chandos 24-bit Recording**

The Chandos policy of being at the forefront of technology is now further advanced by the use of 24-bit recording. 24-bit has a dynamic range that is up to 48dB greater and up to 256 times the resolution of standard 16-bit recordings. These improvements now let you the listener enjoy more of the natural clarity and ambience of the 'Chandos sound'.

Vincent Woodstock pipe organ supplied by Abinger Organ Hire

Language coach: Charles Kilpatrick

Diction coach: Ludmilla Andrew

Coach for Azucena: Ian Judge

**Recording producer** Brian Couzens

**Sound engineer** Ralph Couzens

**Assistant engineer** Richard Smoker

**Editor** Rachel Smith

**Operas administrator** Sue Shortridge

**Recording venue** Blackheath Halls, London; 16–20 December 1999

**Front cover** Montage incorporating photograph of Anne Mason by Bill Rafferty and photograph of the 11th-century Castle Loarre in the Huesca province of the Spanish Pyrenees by John Ferro Sims

**Back cover** Photograph of David Parry by Russell Duncan

**Design** Cass Cassidy

**Booklet typeset by** Dave Partridge

**Booklet editor** Finn S. Gundersen

**Copyright** English National Opera

© 2000 Chandos Records Ltd

© 2000 Chandos Records Ltd

Chandos Records Ltd, Colchester, Essex, England

Printed in the EU

VERDI: IL TROVATORE

24 bit

**CHANDOS** DIGITAL 2-disc set **CHAN 3036(2)**

Giuseppe Verdi (1813–1901)

**Il trovatore (The Troubadour)**

Opera in four parts

Text by Salvatore Cammarano, from the drama *El trovador* by Antonio García Gutiérrez

English translation by Tom Hammond

**Count di Luna**, a young nobleman of Aragon ..... Alan Opie *baritone*

**Ferrando**, captain of the Count's guard ..... Clive Bayley *bass*

**Dofia Leonora**, lady-in-waiting to the Princess of Aragon ... Sharon Sweet *soprano*

**Inez**, confidante of Leonora ..... Helen Williams *soprano*

**Azucena**, a gipsy woman from Biscay ..... Anne Mason *mezzo-soprano*

**Manrico** (The Troubadour), supposed son of Azucena, a rebel under

Prince Urgel ..... Dennis O'Neill *tenor*

**Ruiz**, a soldier in Manrico's service ..... Marc Le Brocq *tenor*

A Gipsy, a Messenger, Servants and Retainers of the Count, Followers of  
Manrico, Soldiers, Gipsies, Nuns, Guards

Geoffrey Mitchell Choir

London Philharmonic Orchestra

**David Parry**

COMPACT DISC ONE

TT 71:23

DDD

COMPACT DISC TWO

TT 63:33

**CHANDOS RECORDS LTD**  
Colchester . Essex . England

LC 7038

© 2000 Chandos Records Ltd  
© 2000 Chandos Records Ltd



SOLOISTS/LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA/PARRY

CHAN 3036(2)

CHANDOS